

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 226 826

PS 013 354

AUTHOR Copeland, Tom, Ed.
TITLE A Consultation in Writing.
INSTITUTION Toys 'n Things Training and Resource Center, St. Paul, Minn.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-934140-05-7
PUB DATE 82
NOTE 57p.
AVAILABLE FROM Toys 'n Things Press, 906 North Dale Street, St. Paul, MN 55103 (Paper, \$25.00).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Attitude Measures; Early Childhood Education; *Employer Attitudes; *Employer Supported Day Care; Flexible Working Hours; Fringe Benefits; Guidelines; Questionnaires; Research Design; *Surveys

ABSTRACT

A step-by-step description of the Minnesota Business Survey process is provided as a guide for the design and implementation of a successful survey of business attitudes and practices in the area of child care benefits. The description of the survey process is divided into five steps: goals, design, audience, distribution, and results. Information provided in these steps is intended to help others design an effective survey and cover letters, identify the appropriate business audience to survey, obtain publicity and contacts for the survey, and make efficient use of time and money. Samples of questionnaire forms and cover letters, as well as a summary of other survey results conducted in the area of employer-supported supported child care, are included in 19 appendices. (MP)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

ED226826

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- ☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

A CONSULTATION IN WRITING

Written and Edited

By

Tom Copeland

Program Director

Parents in the Workplace

A Division of Toys 'n Things Training
and Resource Center, Inc.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Jean M. Nicol/Re-
sources for Child Car-
ing, Inc.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PS 013354

Copyright © 1982 by Toys 'n Things Press
All rights reserved. No part of this
book may be reproduced without written
permission from the publisher, except
in the case of brief quotations for
reviews and articles.

Published by: Toys 'n Things Training
and Resource Center, Inc.
906 North Dale Street
St. Paul, MN 55103

ISBN: 0-934140-05-7

A CONSULTATION IN WRITING

This "Consultation in Writing" provides a step by step guide to the design and implementation of a successful survey of business attitudes and practices in the area of child care benefits. The steps included will help you to design an effective survey and cover letters, identify the appropriate business audience to survey, obtain publicity and contacts for your program, and make efficient use of your time and money by avoiding costly mistakes. Use this consultation to replicate our survey process in your own community.

The Minnesota Business Survey was conducted by Toys 'n Things Training and Resource Center of St. Paul, Minnesota. Parents in the Workplace, a division of Toys 'n Things, which designed and distributed the survey, offers a variety of services to businesses that are interested in providing child care benefits for their employees. The survey was undertaken with assistance from CETA and the Minnesota Department of Education, Adult Vocational Section through the St. Paul Technical Vocational Institute, as part of an effort to eliminate child care as a barrier to unsubsidized employment.

The description of the survey process is divided into five steps: Goals, Design, Audience, Distribution and Results.

GOALS:

The first step in designing the survey was to spell out its purposes and goals. These included:

1. To identify at least 100 businesses that are providing some kind of an employee benefit for working parents.
2. To learn about child care practices across the state, from both large and small businesses, in both urban and rural areas.
3. To find out what the current barriers are to further action in the area of child care benefits by employers.
4. To identify as many new and innovative solutions as possible to parents' child care needs.
5. To find out what employers need in the way of help--either to make current services more effective or to start new services.
6. To discover problems that employers are having in providing child care benefits.
7. To identify business allies who could help us develop our business and child care project later.

8. To identify employer attitudes in this area.
9. To educate employers as to the wide range of child care benefits available and to create more interest in this subject.
10. To gain public recognition for Parents in the Workplace as a professional and competent resource in this area.

To meet our goals we decided that it was more important to reach as many businesses as possible with our survey than to use research techniques to identify and contact a truly representative sample of Minnesota businesses. We wanted to create interest and generate enthusiasm for employer involvement in providing child care benefits, and we felt little need to carefully document the low percentage of employers who were currently providing child care benefits. Pursuing a valid representative sample would have involved more expense per contact and thus would have reduced the number of businesses we could reach. We wanted the survey to serve as an educational tool to help employers expand their thinking about the number and variety of child care benefit options. Therefore, we decided that it would be useful to send a survey to employers that did not now provide any benefits. Finally, we concluded that our goals of identifying the most likely services and benefits that employers would purchase and of promoting our organization as a provider of services could best be met by reaching out to as many businesses as possible.

DESIGN:

With the above goals in mind, we brainstormed a series of questions for possible inclusion in our survey. (See Appendix A). We circulated these questions and our goals to a number of people within the Toys 'n Things organization who had backgrounds in child care for criticism and suggestions. We also formed an outside advisory group of business and child care experts to provide free consultation. The group included: an affirmative action coordinator of a publishing company, a property manager, a union representative, a representative of the Governor's Task Force on Work and Family, a banker, and a representative from the State Council on the Economic Status of Women. The advisory committee helped us focus our questions to a business audience.

We decided next to hire a survey research company to assist us with the design of the survey. Together we identified the major categories of information to be collected, carefully worded the questions to be simple and succinct, and planned the format/layout to make responding quick and easy by reducing the length to one two-sided page. We also developed a cover letter to introduce the survey to employers. (Early on we decided to eliminate questions about company statistics such as numbers of employees who are parents, single parents, ages of children, etc. because our advisory committee felt that few companies kept such statistics. We also concluded that this information was not vital, that it made the survey too long, and that the information could be obtained later, if needed. We eliminated any questions about a union because we did not want to scare off nonunionized companies by implying that there was a direct link between unions and child care benefits.)

The survey research consultants advised us to make sure that those filling out the survey knew that their company name would be kept confidential. This was important for several reasons. Many companies are reluctant to reveal to the public what they may or may not do in the area of employee benefits for fear of raising expectations when there might not be the intention of following through. Confidentiality allowed someone within the company to fill out the survey without having to take the time to get official company approval. Treating the responses as confidential was also a sign of professionalism that we felt was very important to project. As it turned out, about 90% of the respondents listed their company's name. When we contacted a number of them in a follow-up for our report, they all appreciated our asking for permission to use their company name in our report.

One question that we asked both our advisory committee and our consultant was to what level we should address the survey questionnaire; president, vice-president, personnel director, or community relations director. No clean answer was forthcoming to this question because we learned that each company was different and influential people could be found at all levels of a corporation. We wanted the survey to get into the hands of someone with decision making authority and without a better alternative, we decided to address most of our cover letters to the president of the company. When we used the mailing list of a personnel association, we addressed our survey to personnel directors. In analyzing the returned surveys we found that the responses came from a number of different corporate levels from top to bottom, but the majority were returned by personnel directors.

A first draft of the survey was prepared and sent out in the newsletter of a Chamber of Commerce from a nearby town. (See Appendix B). The responses we received indicated that some of the questions were confusing so we revised the survey. We then received permission to send the rewritten survey to 200 members of the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce as another test group. Some minor changes were made and our final draft survey form and cover were completed. (See Appendix C and D). The survey was typeset to project a professional image.

DISTRIBUTION:

With our survey in hand and our goal of reaching as many businesses as possible in mind, we worked with our advisory committee and research consultant to come up with lists of companies to send the survey. We identified the large employers throughout the state from lists published by the large Chambers of Commerce and from a major state business journal. To make sure that we surveyed businesses that employed a large number of women, we obtained lists of all the licensed hospitals and nursing homes in the state, as well as many banks and insurance companies.

A special effort was made to gain the cooperation of several Chambers of Commerce. Every Chamber in the state received a letter of introduction (See Appendix E), and a survey form. Follow-up calls were made to gain access, either for free or for a small charge, to the mailing labels from the Chambers of St. Paul, Minneapolis, Bloomington, Duluth, Red Wing, Blaine, Worthington,

Mankato, Rochester and Marshall. Staff from two Chambers wrote cover letters to accompany the survey (See Appendix F and G). We were successful in obtaining the cooperation of so many Chambers because we sold them on the idea that each Chamber could use the survey results to provide a service to their members. Several Chambers received summary reports from us about the survey results.

In addition to the Chamber lists, surveys were sent to members of the Twin Cities Personnel Association and the Employers Association of Greater Minneapolis. A total of about 6,000 surveys were mailed out. By design, the lists used included employers of every size including a number of one person businesses and individuals such as doctors and lawyers. We found that the smaller the company, the smaller the return rate and the smaller the interest or involvement in child care benefits. Because we could not screen most of the lists we used, there was a certain amount of duplication as several people within one company received a survey. A rough estimate of about 500-750 duplicate surveys were sent out to companies on our lists.

Each survey was accompanied by a cover letter and return addressed envelope without a stamp. Most companies used their own stamp machine for the returned survey. No follow-up calls or postcards were done because we didn't have the time or money to do so. It was also impractical because we did not have access to all the separate mailing lists to know which companies had received the survey.

The costs of the survey included:

Research consulting firm	\$ 400.00
Printing surveys, cover letters, news releases, envelopes, thank you letters	700.00
Bulk mailing--7,000 pieces at 3¢ (now 5.9¢) each	210.00
Survey report typesetting and printing	<u>500.00</u>
	\$1,810.00

Staff time spent on survey development, tabulation and clerical tasks is not reflected in these costs.

RESULTS:

We mailed out the surveys over a period of 4-5 months as we obtained the use of various mailing lists. Seven days after each mailing went out, the returned surveys began coming in. The number of returns increased for about a week and then fell off sharply. After 3 weeks only an occasional return would appear. We received a total of 569 returned surveys, approximately a 10% return rate.

There was some opposition to the survey from a few companies in the business community. Several Chambers of Commerce were reluctant to associate themselves with a child care survey. A half dozen employers returned the survey

without filling it out and complained that child care was the responsibility of the mother and not the employer. A certain number of such negative responses should be expected from a survey of this kind. Based on the number of surveys sent, these negative replies were minimal.

As the surveys were returned, and responses were tabulated, we promptly sent out a thank you letter (See Appendix H). We also enclosed a copy of our program brochure which described the other services we offered.

We used the survey results to gain as much publicity as we could to highlight the positive business responses to child care problems. A news release (See Appendix I) was sent to all daily and many weekly newspapers in the state, as well as to radio and television stations. Several newspapers ran an article about the survey (See Appendix J). The Associated Press ran a story (See Appendix K) that was picked up by a number of newspapers around the country and we received several inquiries as a result. A local business journal published an article we wrote (See Appendix L).

In the middle of the process of sending out the surveys we put on a conference for employers called Parents at Work. The conference addressed many of the options for employer involvement mentioned in our survey. (See Appendix M). A number of those who had filled out the survey were called and personally invited to our conference. We were able to explain to each employer we called how the conference would cover the areas of interest indicated by each individual survey response. These calls did bring in more people to the conference. In addition, we gave a report on the survey results at the conference.

We also spoke at several other conferences on work and family issues about the preliminary survey results. We talked to several groups of employers interested in child care issues (See Appendix N), and one Chamber of Commerce wrote up a detailed summary of the survey in their newsletter (See Appendix O).

The final product of our survey was a report we wrote about the results (See Appendix P). Also included in this consultation is a complete tabulation of questions 2 and 4 (See Appendix Q). The report showcased several child care benefit programs. Follow-up calls were made to a number of employers to obtain further information about their programs and to obtain permission to use their company name in the report. After the report was completed, a copy was sent to all of those who returned the survey. Because we continued to receive survey responses after our report was completed, a revised report will be issued after we run out of our first printing. We sent the report to the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) and a short description was published in their ERIC/EECE Newsletter (See Appendix R). From this we received a number of requests for copies of the survey.

The publicity generated by the survey was fairly easy to obtain and took only a minimum of time and effort. The survey provided information that was timely and newsworthy so it drew the attention of many people. Because the survey covered a variety of child care options, we continued to receive media coverage on subjects such as parenting leave and job sharing months after the survey was over (See Appendix S and T). The survey provided us with valuable

marketing information that we used to set priorities on developing products and services to sell to businesses. For example, the survey showed that worksite seminars and an information/referral service were under the greatest consideration by employers, so we concentrated our efforts in this area to be able to provide these services. We also used the survey results as supporting documentation when we applied for other grants to continue our work in the area of employer interest in child care benefits.

Rights to copy part or all of the employer child care survey may be purchased from Toys 'n Things for \$50.00. For permission or further information contact Tom Copeland, Project Director, 906 North Dale Street, St. Paul, MN 55103 (612)488-7284. Unauthorized use of the survey is prohibited.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONS FOR SURVEY

Does your business currently offer any of the following employee benefits?

- job sharing
- flextime
- part-time work
- sick leave to care for children
- voucher payments for child care
- direct child care subsidy
- maternity/paternity leave
- corporate donation to agencies in child care field
- on-site child care program
- parent education seminars
- child care information/referral service
- "cafeteria" style benefit plan
- shorter work week
- consortium child care
- more insurance for dependent (life, health, vacation)

What other benefits that support working parents does your business offer?

Is your business considering adopting any of the above benefits and, if so, which one (s)?

Which of the above benefits are you interested in knowing more about?

Are you aware of any other businesses offering such benefits?
Name?

How long have these benefits been available?

Who initiated these benefits? Management (what level), employees, union?

What do you consider to be the primary advantages to your business in offering these benefits?

What do you consider to be the primary disadvantages to your business in offering these benefits?

What are the measureable/documented benefits to the company?

What are the costs of each benefit you provide?

Has any interest been expressed by employees in child care?

Do you have any written policies regarding your benefit plans?

What internal problems, if any, have you had with offering any of the above benefits?

Is your business aware of the federal and state corporate tax deductions available to support child care services?

Are the employees in your business unionized?

Has the union expressed interest in any of these benefits?

Survey Questions (Page 2)

How many of your employees are parents?

What ages are their children? Most preschool? Mostly Junior High and up?

What percentage of your employees are women?

Have the employees of your business been surveyed to assess the need for child care benefits?

Have any child care benefit programs been dropped because of lack of employee interest or any other reason?

If your business does not now provide any child care employee benefits,

What is the primary reason why?

If you had access to additional information and/or resources, could this change things?

What obstacles have to be overcome to provide more child care benefits?

What kind of assistance would you like to help you consider whether additional child care services could be provided by your company?

Name of Business

Name of Person filling out this questionnaire, position, phone no.

Have you been surveyed before on this topic? By whom? When?

Did anything ever come of the survey?

APPENDIX B

THE "PARENTS IN THE WORKPLACE" STUDY FOR MINNESOTA BUSINESSES

An increasing number of Minnesota businesses offer a variety of benefits and policies that assist working parents. The results of this study will be used to help employers plan and develop their own programs. The study is being undertaken by 'Parents in the Workplace: A Management Resource for Employers,' a division of Toys 'n Things Training and Resource Center (a nonprofit organization) which has received funds from CETA and the Minnesota Department of Education, Adult Vocational Division. Please take a moment to fill it out and return it to the address given below.

1. Which best describes your company's policy concerning the following employee benefits?

(Check a response for each item)

Currently Are Considering/ Would'n't
Have This Could Consider Do This

- | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|
| (a) Two people sharing one job? | () | () | () |
| (b) Flexible scheduling of employee's hours? | () | () | () |
| (c) Opportunity for part-time work? | () | () | () |
| (d) Sick leave to care for children? | () | () | () |
| (e) Child care center at the worksite? | () | () | () |
| (f) Corporate charitable contributions to child care programs? | () | () | () |
| (g) Subsidy for parents who choose own day care program? | () | () | () |
| (h) Cooperate with another business in providing child care benefits? | () | () | () |
| (i) Disability leave for new mothers? | () | () | () |
| (j) Child care leave for new fathers? | () | () | () |
| (k) Parent training on work and family issues at worksite seminars? | () | () | () |
| (l) Child care information/referral service? | () | () | () |
| (m) Benefit plan which allows employees to trade off one benefit for another? | () | () | () |
| (n) Flexible work places? | () | () | () |

If your company has produced any written descriptions of these programs would you be willing to share this as part of our study? YES ___ NO ___

2. What other things does your company do to help employees cope with their child care needs?

3. Do you believe your company's way of helping with employee child care needs has a positive effect, no effect, or a negative effect on the following:

(Check one response for each item)

Positive Effect No Effect Negative Effect

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| (a) Employee productivity? | () | () | () |
| (b) Absenteeism? | () | () | () |
| (c) Recruitment of new employees? | () | () | () |
| (d) Retention of current employees? | () | () | () |
| (e) Company profits? | () | () | () |
| (f) Employee morale? | () | () | () |
| (g) Tardiness? | () | () | () |
| (h) Employee training costs? | () | () | () |

4. Please describe problems you have had related to child care needs of employees or any of your benefits related to child care?

5. Has your company done the following?

(Check one response for each item)

	Are Considering/		
	Yes	Could Consider	No
(a) Conducted an employee survey about their child care needs?	()	()	()
(b) Met with other employers to consider child care related problems?	()	()	()
(c) Requested proposals from a child care center?	()	()	()
(d) Management-held discussions about child care issues?	()	()	()
(e) Initiated a child care employee benefit but dropped it because it didn't work?	()	()	()
(f) Appointed someone within your company to handle child care problems?	()	()	()
(g) Other _____	()	()	()

6. Would you like to know more about the following?

(Check one response for each item)

	No, I know all I need to about this		No, I'm not interested in this.
	Yes		
(a) Tax incentives for employers who provide child care benefits?	()	()	()
(b) Tax incentives for employees who receive child care benefits?	()	()	()
(c) Costs of providing various child care benefits?	()	()	()
(d) Research that shows the effects of child care benefits on company profits?	()	()	()
(e) How to assess your own needs and develop a benefits program for working parents?	()	()	()

7. Please list the names of any other companies that you know provide employees with benefits related to child care needs.

Name of Company

Contact Person

8. Name of person filling out this form _____

Title _____

Name of Company _____

Address _____

Please return this study form to Tom Copeland, Parents in the Workplace, 906 N. Dale St. St. Paul, MN 55103 (612) 488-7284.

10. Check here if you wish to receive a summary of this study

YES ____ NO ____

The "Parents in the Workplace" Study for Minnesota Businesses

1. Which best describes what your company is doing concerning the following?
(Check one response for **each** item.)

	Currently Have This	Are Considering/ Could Consider	Wouldn't Do This
(a) Two people sharing one job?	()	()	()
(b) Flexible scheduling of employee's work hours?	()	()	()
(c) Opportunity for part-time work?	()	()	()
(d) Leave to care for sick children?	()	()	()
(e) Child care center at the worksite?	()	()	()
(f) Corporate charitable contributions to child care programs?	()	()	()
(g) Subsidy for parents who choose their own day care program?	()	()	()
(h) Cooperate jointly with other business in providing child care benefits?	()	()	()
(i) Disability leave for new mothers?	()	()	()
(j) Child care leave for new parents?	()	()	()
(k) Parent training on issues related to work that are offered at worksite seminars?	()	()	()
(l) Child care information/referral service?	()	()	()
(m) Benefit package which allows employees to choose which benefits they want?	()	()	()
(n) Subscribe to outside agency to provide family related services for employees?	()	()	()

If your company has produced any written descriptions of these programs, would you be willing to share these with us?

Yes_____ No_____

2. What other things does your company do to help employees cope with their child care needs?

3. In your opinion, does assisting with employee child care needs have a positive effect, no effect, or a negative effect on the following:
(Check one response for **each** item)

	Positive Effect	No Effect	Negative Effect
(a) Employee productivity?	()	()	()
(b) Absenteeism?	()	()	()
(c) Recruitment of new employees?	()	()	()
(d) Retention of current employees?	()	()	()
(e) Company profits?	()	()	()
(f) Employee morale?	()	()	()
(g) Tardiness?	()	()	()
(h) Employee training costs?	()	()	()

4. Please describe problems you have had related to child care needs of employees or related to any of your child care benefits.

5. Has your company done the following?
(Check one response for **each** item)

	Yes	No, But Are Considering/ Could Consider	No
(a) Conducted an employee survey about their child care needs?	()	()	()
(b) Met with other employers to consider child care related problems?	()	()	()
(c) Requested proposals from a child care center?	()	()	()
(d) Had management discussions about child care issues?	()	()	()
(e) Initiated a child care employee benefit but dropped it because it didn't work?	()	()	()
(f) Appointed someone within your company to handle child care problems?	()	()	()
(g) Other _____	()	()	()

6. Does your company know about the following?
(Check one response for **each** item)

	Yes	No, but we want to know more about this	No, we're not interested in this
(a) Tax incentives for employers who provide child care benefits?	()	()	()
(b) Tax information for employees who receive child care benefits?	()	()	()
(c) Costs of providing various child care benefits?	()	()	()
(d) Research that shows the effects of child care benefits on company profits?	()	()	()
(e) How to assess your own needs and develop a benefits program for working parents?	()	()	()

7. Please list the names of any other companies you know that provide employees with benefits related to child care needs.

Name of Company

Contact Person

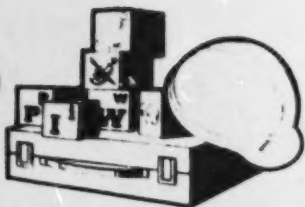
8. Name of person filling out this form _____

Title _____

Name of Company _____

Address _____

9. Do you wish to receive a summary of this study? Yes _____ No _____
10. Please return this form to Tom Copeland, **Parents in the Workplace**, 906 N. Dale St., St. Paul, MN 55103 (612) 488-7284.



PARENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

A Management Resource for Employers

Dear President:

An increasing number of Minnesota employers are becoming conscious of how company benefits associated with child care can reduce company problems such as absenteeism, turnover training costs, tardiness, productivity and employee morale.

Our organization has received a grant to conduct a study of Minnesota businesses to identify the companies that are currently offering, or are interested in offering, some kind of child care benefit to their employees. The results of this study will be used to help employers plan, develop and make the best use of their own employee benefit program. We are asking that you identify your company only to assist us in our follow-up work. No company will be identified by name in the study report without the permission of that company. We will send a summary of our findings to all who complete the survey.

If you have any questions, please call me collect at (612) 488-7284.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Copeland".

Tom Copeland
Industry Specialist

P.S. If someone else in your company should complete this survey, please forward it to that person.

● toys 'n things

TRAINING & RESOURCE CENTER, INC.

906 No. Dale Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55103
(612) 488-7284

Dear Chamber Director:

Enclosed is a news release explaining our Business Support for Working Parents Project. The rapid influx into the work force of women with preschool children has meant that more and more businesses are exploring what they can do to assist the child care needs of working parents. The goal of this project is to encourage employers to provide more child care benefits for their employees. We are conducting a survey of businesses around the state to find out what current benefits are being offered such as: job sharing, flextime, part-time work, family sick leave, child care at the work site, child care subsidies, "cafeteria" style benefits, and more. Based on the information we receive, we shall write a "how-to" handbook to help employers in this area.

We are writing to all the Chambers of Commerce in Minnesota to seek help with our survey. Could you include the enclosed news release in your next local Chamber newsletter, if you have one? Or, we can provide as many copies as necessary to be included in your next mailing to your members. We are interested in identifying as many businesses as possible, so any help you could give us would be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact Laurel Goulding or Tom Copeland at Toys 'n Things, 906 N. Dale Street, St. Paul, MN 55103; (612) 488-7284.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Tom Copeland

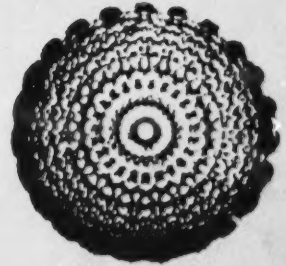
Tom Copeland
Industry Specialist

TC:zi

Enc.

supporting people who care for young children

APPENDIX F



SAINT PAUL
AREA CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE
701 North Central Tower
445 Minnesota Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota
55101 Phone: 222 5561

July 20, 1981

FILMED FROM
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dear Chamber Members:

As part of our commitment to our members' needs, I have recently joined the Employer/Day Care Task Force of the Child Care Council of Ramsey County. This Task Force was designed to assist businesses with meeting the needs of the working parent. Parents in the Workplace, represented on the Task Force and a management resource for employers, has asked the Chamber to assist in the completion of a statewide survey on employer benefits for working parents.

The Chamber is aware that an increasing number of Minnesota employers are becoming conscious of how company benefits associated with childcare can reduce recurring problems, such as: absenteeism, tardiness and turnover, and actually increase productivity and employee morale.

Parents in the Workplace has received a grant to survey Minnesota businesses in order to identify companies that are currently offering, or are interested in offering, some type of benefit package for working parents. The results of the study will be used to help employers plan, develop and/or expand their employee benefits package. Parents in the Workplace is also preparing a manual to assist employer implementation of the benefits package.

As you will see on the survey, work alternatives which you may not recognize as beneficial to your "working parents" employees are indicated, such as flextime, part-time and job sharing. Please take a moment to complete the survey and identify your company in order to assist in follow-up contacts. Survey results will be available to the public, however, but will not identify companies without written permission. A self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Sincerely yours,

Diane L. Lynch
Director of Governmental Research

DLL:mam



**MARSHALL
AREA
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE**



**GASLIGHT SQUARE, MAIN AT FIFTH
MARSHALL, MINNESOTA 56258
TELEPHONE AC 507/532-4484**

November, 1981

To: All Members

An increasing number of Minnesota employers are becoming conscious of how company benefits associated with child care can reduce company problems such as absenteeism, turnover training costs, tardiness, productivity and employee morale.

Enclosed is a survey instrument developed by Parents in the Workplace, a management resource for employers located in St. Paul. It is a division of Toys 'n Things Training and Resource Center and is a non-profit corporation funded by CETA and the Minnesota Department of Education, Adult Vocational Section through the St. Paul Technical Vocational Institute. They have developed programs and trained over 10,000 caregivers in the child care business and have published over twenty books in the field. They also put on a recent series of programs in Marshall.

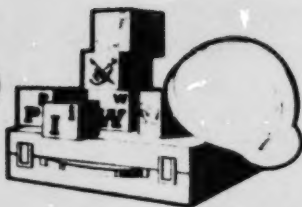
The results of this study will be used to help employers plan, develop and make the best use of their own employee benefit program. The study will identify the companies that are currently offering, or interested in offering, some kind of child care benefit for their employees. You are asked to identify your company only to assist in follow-up work and no company will be identified by name in the study report without the permission of the company. They will send a summary of the findings to all who complete the survey.

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey and return it in the enclosed envelope. The results could prove very helpful to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dale Collinsworth".

Dale Collinsworth
Executive Vice President



PARENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

A Management Resource for Employers

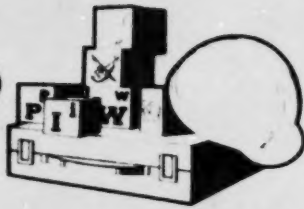
Thank you for taking the time to fill out our "Parents in the Workplace" survey form. We appreciate your cooperation with our efforts to inventory Minnesota businesses that are offering child care benefits to their employees. You will be hearing from us shortly regarding your interest in receiving further information. We will also be sending you a copy of a summary of the survey responses we received sometime this fall.

Enclosed is a brochure explaining our Parents in the Workplace project in further detail. If we can be of any further help, let me know.

Sincerely,

Tom Copeland
Industry Specialist

Enc.



PARENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

A Management Resource for Employers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
CONTACT TOM COPELAND
(612) 488-7284

NEWS RELEASE

A just completed survey of 473 Minnesota businesses reveals that many are considering providing a wide range of child care related benefits for their employees.

Flexible scheduling of employees' work hours (54%), part-time work (81%), leave to care for sick children (58%) and disability leave for new mothers (71%) lead the list of benefits now offered by these businesses. Only nine businesses (2%) provide an on-site child care center and 63% of the respondents said they would not consider this option. Benefits being considered the most included worksite parent education seminars (64%), child care information/referral service (64%), a flexible benefit program (52%), and job sharing (49%).

The survey was conducted by Parents in the Workplace: A Management Resource for Employers, a nonprofit organization based in St. Paul. Parents in the Workplace, in cooperation with St. Paul Technical Vocational Institute and CETA, offers a variety of educational and consultative services for businesses with employees who are parents.

Over 70% of the survey respondents believe that assisting their employees with child care needs has a positive effect on absenteeism, employee recruitment, retention, productivity and morale. In all, less than 5% believe that such assistance would have a negative effect.

The survey was sent to approximately 5,000 Minnesota businesses, both large and small, metro based and rural, between August and November, 1981. Mailing lists from a number of Chambers of Commerce and other trade and professional associations were used. Because of this, the survey respondents do not represent a scientific sample of all Minnesota businesses.

Copies of the survey report, "Minnesota Business Survey" are available for \$2.50 postpaid from Parents in the Workplace, 906 N. Dale St., St. Paul, MN 55103; (612) 488-7284.

A Division of Toys 'n Things Training and Resource Center, Inc.
906 North Dale Street, St. Paul, MN 55103 (612) 488-7284

Many Businesses Planning Child Care Benefits for Employees

Downtowner Feb 17, 1982

A just completed survey of 473 Minnesota businesses reveals that many are considering providing a wide range of child care related benefits for their employees.

Flexible scheduling of employees' work hours (54%), part-time work (81%), leave to care for sick children (58%) and disability leave for new mothers (71%) lead the list of benefits now offered by these businesses. Only nine businesses (2%) provide an on-site child care center and 63% of the respondents said they would not consider this option. Benefits being considered the most included worksite parent education seminars (64%), child care information/referral service (64%), a

flexible benefit program (52%), and job sharing (49%).

The survey was conducted by Parents in the Workplace: A Management Resource for Employers, a nonprofit organization based in St. Paul. Parents in the Workplace, in cooperation with St. Paul Technical Vocational Institute and CETA, offers a variety of educational and consultative services for businesses with employees who are parents.

Over 70% of the survey respondents believe that assisting their employees with child care needs has a positive effect on absenteeism, employee recruitment, retention, productivity and morale. In

all, less than 5% believe that such assistance would have a negative effect.

The survey was sent to approximately 5,000 Minnesota businesses, both large and small, metro based and rural, between August and November, 1981. Mailing lists from a number of Chambers of Commerce and other trade and professional associations were used. Because of this, the survey respondents do not represent a scientific sample of all Minnesota businesses.

Copies of the survey report, "Minnesota Business Survey" are available for \$2.50 postpaid from Parents in the Workplace, 906 N. Dale St., St. Paul, MN 55103; or by calling 468-7284.

Mpls. Tribune Dec 21, 1981

Survey finds range of child-care benefits

Associated Press

From child care at the work place to work-leave for parents to care for sick children, a variety of child-care benefits is offered by some Minnesota employers, a survey shows.

The survey was conducted by Parents in the Workplace, a St. Paul-based, nonprofit organization offering educational and consulting services to businesses.

The survey found that more than 70 percent of the respondents believed the benefits had a positive effect on employee productivity, absenteeism, recruitment, retention and morale.

In addition, employers' major concerns were absenteeism due to sick children, the inability to locate an adequate child-care provider and a concern for equity when only some employees could take advantage of a child-care benefit, the survey found.

The survey was sent to 5,000 Minnesota businesses between August and November and 473 responses were received. Survey respondents do not represent a scientific sample.

Survey responses from 36 banks and financial institutions, 29 hospitals, 26 nursing homes and 24 insurance companies expressed a "higher than average level of activity and interest in child-care benefits," according to the survey.

Twenty-eight percent of the respondents said they allow two people to share one job, 54 percent said they have flexible scheduling of employees' work hours, 58 percent offer leave to care for sick children, 2 percent provide child care at the work place, 3 percent subsidize parents' day-care expenses, 38 percent provide child-care leave for new parents and 16 percent package benefits so employees can choose which they want.

Is There A Corporate Nursery In Your Future?

The changing workforce is placing new demands on management—many firms are responding with benefits such as child care assistance to help employees meet their needs.

by Tom Copeland

Minnesota businesses in the 1980s are likely to undertake significant new initiatives to help their employees cope with the stress of managing both family and work responsibilities.

Signs of change in corporate management policies and employee benefit programs can already be seen. There has been a sharp rise in interest in such programs as flextime, job sharing, worksite parent education seminars, child care information and referral services, and worksite child care centers. Employers are turning to these programs to help lower absenteeism and tardiness, help increase productivity and job satisfaction, and provide needed community services.

There are a number of factors behind these changes:

- The overall workforce participation rate for women in Minnesota age 16-64 rose from 38 percent in 1960 to an estimated 65 percent in 1980. Projections indicate that this rate will grow to 74 percent by 1990.

- Minnesota families have been transformed by a dramatic in-

crease in two paycheck households and single parent families.

- A recent survey of Minnesota businesses reveals that over 70 percent of the respondents believe that assisting with their employees' child care needs has a positive effect on employee productivity, absenteeism, recruitment of new employees, retention of current employees, employee morale and tardiness. Less than five percent said that it would have a negative effect in these areas.

- The newly passed Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 gives working parents and businesses additional tax incentives to help meet the high cost of providing child care (see box).

The last year has seen a national upsurge of corporate interest in the issue of child care benefits for working parents. Minnesota business involvement has been particularly active in this area, according to the survey conducted by Parents in the Workplace: A Management Resource for Employers. Parents in the Workplace is a non profit organization in St. Paul providing consulting services in child care programs and benefits.

The survey, completed in November 1981, examined business attitudes, practices and problems associated with providing child care benefits for employees. It was mailed to approximately 4,000 businesses around the state and 342 responses were received. The most often reported child care programs currently offered were flexible scheduling of work hours, opportunities for part-time work, leave to care for sick children, and disability for new mothers (see survey box details). Although much attention has been given to child care centers at the worksite, only six businesses were identified who currently provide this option. Fully 60 percent of the respondents said they would not consider this option for their company, probably because of the high cost of such a program or the limited size of the company.

The most frequently reported child care related problem for employers was absenteeism. Causes of the absenteeism included sick or injured children, doctor's appointments for children, inability to find a child care provider, and lack of available infant care. Another major concern was equality; if a child



Children attending the on-site day care facility at Cardiac Pacemakers in Arden Hills arrive with their parents in the

morning, often eat lunch with them in the company cafeteria, and go home together at night.

care benefit is provided, non parent employees will want something also. See accompanying tax box for a discussion of one solution to this: flexible benefits.

The survey showed that while there is growing activity in business involvement in child care programs, the expressed interest is well ahead of actual implementation of child care programs. Because of the diversity in company size, number of female employees and employee needs, there is clearly no one best solution to the problem. Below are some examples of the variety of business involvement.

- When St. Paul Companies conducted a survey of its employees seven years ago, there was little interest in child care benefits. But last September their Corporate Responsibility Committee, made up of top management personnel, adopted a series of recommendations proposed by an internal task force chaired by Compensation Manager Kathleen Murphy.

Among the adopted recommendations: provide leadership while working with other companies to establish a child care center for employees at their offices in downtown St. Paul and Woodbury; include child care in a new study of a flexible benefit plan; expand and develop policies to encourage the use of flexible hours, permanent part-time employment and job sharing; and provide a home office ombudsman to counsel employees on their child care needs. St. Paul Companies has already given \$10,000 towards a computerized child care information and referral system now being organized by the Child Care Council of Ramsey County. "The key in our company has been our top management support," says Murphy.

- Unlike the thousands of employees of a St. Paul Companies, Rickbeil's Inc., a hardware, furniture and appliance store in Worthington, has only 40 retail employees, nine of whom are women. Yet the consultant and former owner, Hardy Rickbeil, recognizes the importance of providing a good work environment for working parents. Rickbeil's sets up flexible work hours for each employee so that they will not neglect their family. The company understands that women are no longer expected to re-



Children play while their employee parents work not far away.

main at home, and when four of its female employees went through pregnancies recently, adjustments in work hours were handled successfully. "Kids are the future," said Rickbeil, who expects more women to be working for his company in the future.

- Fairview Community Hospital sponsors a child care center for fifty children in Minneapolis. Fifty percent of the children come from Fairview employees. The program, called Creative Hours in Learning Development (CHILD), began in 1973 in response to a survey that identified a center as a need for nurses. Fairview provides a 20 percent subsidy for users who are Fairview employees. Community users pay the full \$50 for care from 6:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. for a five day week.

Businesses Respond to Benefits Survey

Which best describes what your company is doing concerning the following?

	Currently Have This	Are Considering/ Could Consider	Wouldn't Do This
(a) Two people sharing one job?	29%	51%	21%
(b) Flexible scheduling of employee's work hours?	56%	30%	14%
(c) Opportunity for part-time work?	80%	16%	4%
(d) Leave to care for sick children?	55%	27%	18%
(e) Child care center at the worksite?	2%	38%	50%
(f) Corporate charitable contributions to child care programs?	15%	43%	42%
(g) Subsidy for parents who choose their own day care program?	3%	32%	65%
(h) Cooperate jointly with other business in providing child care benefits?	9%	57%	34%
(i) Disability leave for new mothers?	75%	15%	11%
(j) Child care leave for new parents?	39%	40%	21%
(k) Worksite seminars to help parents learn to balance work and family responsibilities?	7%	67%	26%
(l) Child care information/referral service?	15%	65%	20%
(m) Benefit package which allows employees to choose which benefits they want?	16%	56%	29%
(n) Subscribe to outside agency to provide family related services for employees?	22%	49%	29%

Based upon 342 returns



Cardiac Pacemakers is one of the first Minnesota companies to open a day care facility. There are separate rooms for toddlers and kindergartners, large indoor and outdoor play areas, and a "get well" room.

According to Alice Journey, Director of CHILD, "The main advantage to the hospital for this program is retention. It costs about \$800 to recruit and incorporate one new employee onto the payroll." She said that the center has helped cut back on absenteeism and parents have expressed better feelings about the hospital as a result. Journey has been receiving 4-5 calls or letters per week from around the country from hospitals interested in duplicating the Fairview model.

- When attorney Don Heffernan moved to his new law office in downtown St. Paul a year and half ago, he also made space for his two children, now ages 13 and 17. A special room was outfitted with a refrigerator, sofa/bed, television and desk where his children study and play after school each day from 3-5:50 p.m. Heffernan says the arrangement has worked out well for everyone.

- The Otto Bremer Foundation has sponsored parent education and child care training seminars for the past year for Bremer Bank Group communities. The training is provided by Parents in the Workplace in cooperation with St. Paul Technical Vocational Institute. The seminars, held during elongated lunch

Child Care And Taxes

Under the recently passed Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, amounts paid by an employer to an employee under a qualified dependent care assistance program are not included in the gross income of the employee, for the tax year beginning January 1, 1982.

The dependent care assistance program may assist employees by paying providers who offer dependent care, directly reimbursing employees for their child care costs, or establishing an on-site child care center.

Employers may include this program as a part of their fringe benefit program or as an addi-

tional option under a flexible benefit plan. A flexible benefit or "cafeteria" plan usually provides employees with a "core" of fixed benefits and then allows them to choose between an option of benefits such as medical coverage, disability, vacation, retirement, child care, etc. Such a plan satisfies conflicting employee needs in an equitable manner.

Under the new tax law, employers may allow employees to choose between receiving a salary increase and taking the increase as dependent care assistance, thus avoiding taxes on the increase. Amounts paid under this program are not sub-

ject to social security tax, federal income tax withholding, or federal unemployment.

Expenditures to provide for child care services for employees in general are deductible as ordinary and necessary business expenses when they benefit the employer's business by reducing absenteeism and turnover. The new tax law also raises the limit on the amount of tax deductible charitable contributions from five percent to ten percent of the corporation's taxable income that may be made to qualifying tax exempt organizations providing direct child care services or child care support services.

breaks and in the evenings, have reached over 650 working parents of the member banks, family day care providers, foster parents, teachers and other local community people.

Minnesota towns which have

hosted these seminars to date include: Alexandria, Climax/Shelly, Crookston, Warren, Marshall, South St. Paul, Watertown and St. Cloud. The program will continue into 1982. Martin Haar, president of the Alexandria Bank and Trust

Company said, "The workshops were so well received that we have had requests to sponsor similar ones."

Despite this activity, many businesses are unsure about how to respond to the child care needs of

On-Site Day Care Benefits Local Firm

by Susan W. Plaster

Susan W. Plaster is corporate communications manager of Cardiac Pacemakers, Inc.

At Cardiac Pacemakers, Inc. (CPI) in Arden Hills, the president's secretary brings her four-year-old daughter to work with her each day. The company's director of research brings his two sons. Several employees lunch with their children daily in the company cafeteria. A total of 25 children arrive at CPI each morning and leave with their parents at the end of the workday.

What's happening at CPI may eventually reach more Minnesota businesses. It's called "on-site day care," meaning day care available at the workplace. In March, 1981, CPI became one of the first local corporations to open such a facility. The company provides the space, utilities, playground area and janitorial services for Busy Bees Learning Centers, Inc. to operate a day care center for children of employees. The parents pay Busy Bees Learning Center at a per diem/per child rate.

Day care at the workplace has become a successful reality at CPI—as CPI's management, the parents and the children involved will attest. For the parents with children at CPI's Busy Bees Center, quality day care is no longer a worry. "I feel more comfortable knowing she's just downstairs," says one of the parents. "It's a closer feeling of association when we put

on our coats and hold hands walking out of the building at night."

The center operates from 6:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. on weekdays. The weekly fee of \$44.50 per child includes snacks. Says Nancy Nelson, president of Busy Bees Learning Centers, Inc., "Our curriculum is carefully structured, based on the Palo Alto Preschool Curriculum and our own kindergarten curriculum. At each age level the child gets help in developing specific skills and knowledge." Nelson employs a manager and 3½ teachers at the CPI day care center, making the staff/child ratio 1/7.

The benefits for parent and child are obvious, but what prompted this employer to begin such a program?

When CPI personnel representative Chris Stein evaluated an employee survey on day care in July 1980, he received many favorable comments. The idea seemed to fit with employee needs. Moreover, it fit with the company's desire to enhance the work environment, provide additional benefits and reduce absenteeism.

While Stein has no numbers yet to show that the program has reduced absenteeism or increased productivity, he says "I can't help but believe this program makes it easier for parents to reach the workplace with fewer delays and in a better frame of mind. The situation is much more convenient for the parents than having the children cared for elsewhere. Say a child

becomes mildly sick during the day. The parent is immediately notified and the child can rest in our 'get well room.' The parent can evaluate the child's condition and make a reasonable judgment about whether to take the child home. Or maybe the child is recuperating from an illness that is no longer contagious. The teachers can see that the child gets extra rest time and the parent can visit during the day to check on the child, administer medications, etc. The parent has fewer worries this way." Parents have also used the Busy Bees Center temporarily while regular sitters vacationed or during the summer season.

Just a few months ago CPI remodeled engineering offices, creating space for the day care area. Besides the "get well" room, there are separate rooms for the toddlers and the kindergartners and a large indoor play area. The fenced outdoor play area was completed this summer. "At what was really not much expense, we added an important 'satisfier' for a good number of employees," says Stein. "Besides reducing absenteeism and tardiness, we expect the day care program to help us retain valued employees and recruit new ones."

Says one of the parents, "When I compare my company's benefits to those of my friends, they're envious of our day care arrangement." For a company its size—less than 1,000 employees, CPI has taken an innovative step in anticipating employee needs.

their employees. Many are not aware of the variety of solutions that have been implemented or the extent of services available from the child care community. One such solution that has worked in other parts of the country is for a company to subsidize child care slots in a network of family day care providers. This would allow employees to choose their own provider and support existing child care resources.

Parents in the Workplace offers a range of services to businesses interested in providing child care programs and benefits including parent training seminars, assessments of employee child care needs, feasibility studies to assess the impact of specific child care options, technical assistance, seminars for human resource/personnel staff, and resource materials. They can be contacted at 906 North Dale Street, St. Paul, MN 55103, (612) 488-7284.

All indications about the future point to an even greater expansion of business-initiated child care programs across the country. It also seems certain that the Minnesota business community will continue to show leadership in this area.

Tom Copeland is associated with Parents in the Workplace, a non-profit organization which helps businesses design the appropriate management initiatives to address the child care needs of their employees.

A conference for businesses that employ parents

by Mary Winget

In early October, "Parents at Work," a conference sponsored jointly by Parents in the Workplace in St. Paul and the Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association, brought representatives from over seventy Minnesota companies together on the St. Paul campus of the University of Minnesota to examine the role of the employer in solving employee child care problems.

Because of the dramatic change in the composition of the American labor force, the demand for child care far exceeds the supply. Key-note speaker Dana Friedman, a consultant to the Carnegie Corporation, reported that in 1978 the female participation rate was at a record 50 percent. The largest and fastest growing segment of this group (5.5 million) is that of mothers with preschool children, and she projects that by 1990, 45 percent of all preschool children will have mothers in the workforce.

While the number of available neighbors, grandparents and older siblings has significantly decreased due to the smaller nuclear family structure and increased family mobility, the cost of child care services has become prohibitive to most families. Friedman presented a panoramic view of nationwide corporate response to the dilemma, and provided a number of alternatives to on-site centers such as subsidies either directly to a center or through a voucher system, information and referral services, and parent education and counseling seminars.

Throughout the day a series of panel participants described steps their companies had taken to alleviate the child care problems of their employees and their reasons for doing so. Glen Taylor, of Taylor Industries in Mankato, pointed out that because of location his employees didn't have the resources of a metropolitan area at hand. Employees were reluctant to return after maternity leave or to work late and weekend hours because of the difficulties involved in finding child care. His company set up an on-site center that accommodates 130 children and for which there is now a waiting list. Chris Stein of Cardiac Pacemakers also described his company's center. Both companies contracted with professional day care groups to set up and run their centers.

John Thompson of the Retirement Center of Wright County described the unique setting of Generations Daycare. Located in the institution itself, the on-site center not only solves employee day care problems but also enriches the lives of elderly residents.

Honeywell offers day care information and referral services to their workers, and many other companies have well-attended parent education seminars during lunch hours as well as committees and task forces to evaluate employee day care needs.

Robert Bonine of Pillsbury offered a contrasting point of view, however. He expressed a reluctance on the part of business to get involved in the private lives of employees and felt it could have adverse effects on childrearing and parental responsibility. Furthermore, he said, it is costly, competes with other demands, and affects equity.

Participants were provided with a view of future prospects when Jo Harkins, president of Scenario, Inc. and marriage and family therapist with Kiel Clinics, predicted the changing nature of the workplace and the workforce. By 1990 factories will be operated by robots and 90 percent of all jobs will be information based, according to Harkins. By the year 2000, because of a smaller workforce, younger workers will cut short their educations and older workers will postpone retirement. She foresees multi-generation homes which, rather than solving child care needs, will create an even greater need for "dependent" care for both the very young and the very old.

Other panel participants in the conference included representatives from WCCO-TV, the *Minneapolis Star*, General Mills, Control Data, Northwestern National Bank, 3M, Hewitt Associates, Mt. Sinai Hospital, United and Children's Hospital, Economics Laboratory and St. Paul Companies.

Although interest was high among conference participants and there was general agreement about the problems of working parents, solutions seem to be coming slowly and cautiously. Friedman cited Minnesota as a national leader in the area of child care with sensitive corporate and political policy, yet only a small number of businesses have already shifted to meet the problem. As she pointed out, however, today decisions are being made for the children who will be making decisions about the quality of our care tomorrow.

Can child care work at work?

Employers are taking an interest in day care on the job

By Carol Lacey
Staff Writer

Employers are looking more seriously at child-care options for their employees — but don't expect cribs in the board room anytime soon.

If employers are making a giant leap in interest, they appear to be taking baby steps toward actually considering and supporting child-care options for their employees, according to discussions among Twin Cities business and child-care representatives attending last week's conference on parents and work at the University of Minnesota.

They nodded in agreement as Dana Friedman, a consultant to the Carnegie Corp., told them that within just a few years, employer-sponsored child care has shifted from a curiosity to a phenomenon that "is here to stay."

Friedman, former legislative analyst for the Day Care Council and Coalition for Children and Youth in Washington, D.C., recently completed her doctoral dissertation at Harvard University on employer supports to working parents.

The impetus for such supports has been a dramatic increase in the percentage of women, and particularly mothers, working outside the home, she said. In 1980, women comprised 43 percent of the nation's work force, compared to 29 percent in 1950, according to a "Parents in the Workplace"

Bonine pointed out. Thus, in turn, may create or continue problems of employee inequity.

Further, "it can alter child-rearing patterns and reduce individual family responsibility for their children," he said.

Bonine said he believes there's a reluctance among businesses to interfere with the private lives of employees, and called child rearing "among the most private" aspects of employees' lives.

Corporate involvement in child care also costs money, particularly if it is made available to all employees, he warned, and will compete with other demands for business dollars, especially for those directed toward human resource development within the company. It also can create difficulties with labor negotiations.

Bonine is also concerned that if businesses provide child care, it could contribute to accelerating child-care costs and trigger a domino effect for other employee living needs

of lack of child care.

Relatively few employers — about 1 in 5 — were aware of tax incentives for employer-provided child-care benefits, costs of providing various child-care benefits, or research on how such benefits affect company profits.

Yet a majority of companies reported they were doing something concrete to meet employee child-care needs. Most common were opportunities for flexible scheduling or part-time work, leave to care for sick children and disability leave for new mothers.

Options prime for consideration in the near future included job sharing, child-care information and referral service, work-site seminars to help parents learn to balance work and family responsibilities, and "cafeteria" benefit packages which could include dependent care provisions, allowing employees to choose the benefits they want.

However, employers overwhelmingly rejected

it had the commitment! it needed to move into the child-care venture. The company isn't trying to make money on the child-care center. It isn't even expecting to break even. Instead, Taylor said, the company considered it one of many fringe benefits that probably aren't going to return direct cost in full.

From his experience, Taylor said he sees child care as a need that has to be met either by business or government. "For me, I'd rather it be business," he said, "because it's likely to cost less in the long run."

Friedman amplified why it is important for businesses to get more involved in child-care support now. In the past, 70 percent of all child-care revenues have been paid by parents, 28 to 29 percent by government contribution and 1 to 2 percent by community contributions.

The majority of government support for child care has been in the increase in child-care income tax credit, she said, as well as funds from Title 20



Kirk Lyttle, Pioneer Press

she said. In 1980, women comprised 43 percent of the nation's work force, compared to 29 percent in 1950, according to a "Parents in the Workplace" report compiled by Toys 'n Things, a non-profit training and resource center supported by state and federal funds.

In Minnesota, the pattern is similar, the report stated. The overall work force participation rate for women age 16 to 64 rose from 38 percent in 1960 to 61 percent in 1977. Projections indicate this rate will continue to expand; by 1990 women are projected to constitute 46.5 percent of the state's labor force.

Even more critical, though, is the fact that across the nation, 45 percent of working mothers have children under age 6, and 33 percent have children under age 3, Friedman said.

The way in which companies — large and small, rural and urban, predominantly male or female — are beginning to respond to their employees' child-care concerns makes it clear to her, she said, that this is not a women's issue, but a parents' issue.

However, overwhelming the child-care concerns of employees may be, area businesses do not seem to be swept off their feet. Rather, discussion at the conference suggested they are carefully evaluating the pros and cons before getting involved in what could become a tangled web.

Child care is still very much in the talking stage at Pillsbury Co., according to Robert Bonine, vice president for community relations there. His experience in working with employees and executives on this issue has helped acquaint him with both sides of the corporate child-care ledger.

He's very familiar with arguments against corporate involvement in child care.

It's an increase in salaries to all, especially women, as it becomes a substitute for salary

provide child care, it could contribute to accelerating child-care costs and trigger a domino effect for other employee living needs such as affordable housing.

With all these potential difficulties in mind, he cautioned any business considering support for child-care alternatives for its employees to answer carefully the question, "Will I do any harm with my remedy?"

At the same time, Bonine said he recognizes that doing something to alleviate employee child-care problems can be considered part of a company's corporate responsibility to do the "right thing" for its workers and for the community.

Further, it can also be good for the business itself as it builds morale and increases productivity among employees and helps corporations to meet affirmative action goals by making it easier to attract and retain qualified workers.

The most tangible evidence of local employer interest and action in child care for employees comes from preliminary results of a survey of Minnesota businesses being conducted this fall by the "Parents in the Workplace" project of Toys 'n Things.

By nearly a 3-1 ratio, those responding thus far feel that assisting employee child-care needs would have a positive effect on employee productivity, absenteeism, morale, tardiness and recruitment of new employees or retention of old employees. Only about 5 percent of those responding thought employer assistance with child care would have a negative effect on employees.

When asked to describe problems they had experienced related to employee child-care needs, employers cited absenteeism due to sick children, lack of infant care, problems arranging for child care, and the high cost of losing employees because

allowing employees to choose the benefits they want.

However, employers overwhelmingly rejected the options of child-care subsidies for parents and child-care centers at the worksite.

Despite the general enthusiasm for some form of employer involvement in child care, Tom Copeland, attorney for the "Parents in the Workplace" project, noted that there was a "lot of room between the expressed interest and actual implementation of child-care programs."

Friedman and other speakers offered further reasons why business should get into day care.

Women, particularly those working on assembly lines, have been found to suffer from something Friedman called the "3 o'clock syndrome." At that time of day, "when their latch-key children come home from school, they lose their concentration and more accidents occur," she said.

She called child care a "visible benefit" that can help avoid costly relocation or movement in and out of the labor force for those working now.

That factor helped prompt Taylor Industries, a Mankato firm, to build and begin operating a child-care center for its employees more than a year ago, said Glen Taylor, company president. Because of lack of quality child care, new mothers who wanted to return to work felt that they couldn't. As a result, "we were losing people sometimes for a 10-year period."

"We also found it difficult to get women to move up in our organization because they didn't have the time to make that kind of commitment," he said.

With nearly unanimous backing from the company's 32 top managers, the company decided

The majority of government support for child care has been in the increase in child-care income tax credit, she said, as well as funds from Title 20 Aid to Families with Dependent Children, work incentives and child-care food programs, "all on the cutting edge of David Stockman's budget."

Child care is likely to become useful in recruiting qualified employees, speakers maintained. It may seem paradoxical to talk about recruitment incentives at a time when unemployment rates are high, but Friedman and others said they anticipate changes in the labor market.

Li Gov. Lou Wangberg, for example, predicted that a shortage of employees, especially employees with high technical qualifications, will increase significantly by the end of the 1980s.

While the current wave of prime corporate interest in child care has been building just within the past few months, Friedman attributes launching of this interest to tax laws passed in the late 1960s, which offer business some incentives for child-care provision. But she was quick to point out that corporate involvement in child care goes back more than a century. During the Civil War, for example, companies manufacturing rifles and gunpowder provided child care for women working while their husbands were off fighting. And in World Wars I and II, the government funded about 4,000 centers for women working in the war effort.

Further information about corporate and community efforts to provide support and assistance for working parents can be obtained from Toys 'n Things, 906 N. Dale St., the Business and Child Care Project of the Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association, 111 E. Franklin Ave., or from the recently launched Parent Child monthly magazine, Box 19065, Minneapolis 55419.

Changing times will affect child-care realities

By Carol Lacey

Minneapolis

There's more to life than home for raising kids. That seems to be the consensus of both parents and businesses.

But the changing realities of family and work life are making that ideal more and more difficult to achieve.

According to last spring's General Mills report, "Families at Work," the majority of parents still arrange somehow for children to be cared for in their own homes, either by other family members or by paid helpers.

However, desirable this heavy reliance on home care is, it may be changing in the American family because of the changes in the economy and in government policies are placing it in jeopardy, observes Dana Friedman, Carnegie Corp. consultant, at a conference on parents at work held at the University of Minnesota last week.

Friedman was formerly legislative liaison for the Day Care Council and the Coalition for Children and Youth in

Little folks

Washington, D.C.

Smaller, more mobile families make it harder to rely on siblings or nearby grandparents or relatives to care for the children.

That may change by the time American families reach the turn of the 21st century, said Jo Harkins, marriage and family therapist and president of Scenario Inc., a human futures-focused consulting firm. Harkins delivered a conference keynote address on the workplace and family futures.

As energy, housing and nursing home costs rise, and as people live longer, American families will return to "reincorporation of more than two generations in the family home," she predicted.

However, this will not bring an automatic solution to child-care needs, rather, it will expand the need for assistance with dependent care for both the very young and the very old. And that, she said, will require "more flexibility and more choice in dependent

care arrangements."

More immediately, not only is care at home scarce, but paid care outside the home is getting harder to find and even harder to afford. Families paying for child care find that cost the fourth largest in their budget — right after food, housing and taxes, Friedman said. Those with lower incomes find the chunk of money going for child care even larger.

Yet actual need is hard to measure. Father may be taking over more of the child-rearing than he did in the past, but in most families it is still primarily the mother's job, Friedman said.

Even if they're having critical problems finding the quality child care they need, Friedman doesn't think most women are likely to run to their employer for help.

"For too many years women were denied jobs because of motherhood, and so they're not likely to walk into the corporation and demand day care," she said.

Efforts of the business and industry project of the Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association (GMDCA) over the past

6½ months have documented, however, that there are not enough child-care services available locally to meet the needs of working parents and that the costs of some existing services are simply beyond the reach of many working parents.

A handful of businesses in Minnesota and across the nation have set up child-care facilities at the workplace or have provided child-care subsidies for parents. But for most parents and employers alike these are alternatives of last resort.

On-site centers and child-care subsidies are expensive and difficult to set up. And for working parents, child care is a multifaceted issue which includes finding and affording child care, making the proper choices for the parents and child, finding enough time to balance demands of home and work, and overcoming the guilt of being a working parent.

More promising for both employers and parents, at least for now, seem to be such options as flexible and part-time job scheduling, family leave to attend to sick children and other child-rearing

needs, expanded time and financial benefits in maternity and paternity leaves, and "cafeteria" benefit packages which include dependent care as one of many benefits which employees can select.

The Science Museum of Minnesota offers a learning break for children and families during public school conference time Thursday and Friday.

Two sessions on "Mysteries of Mummies in Ancient and Modern Times" at 9:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Thursday will explore preservation and decay, bacteria and enzymes, as well as other interesting facts and fictions about mummies.

"Raptors," a program for families, will be held at 9:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Friday. Participants will learn about movements and migrations of wild birds in Minnesota, see live birds and visit the raptor research and rehabilitation program at the University of Minnesota St. Paul campus.

To register or obtain further information, call the museum at 221-4710.

Employers thinking about employee child care benefits, study discloses

By JANICE McFARLAND

Spectrum Assistant Editor

A recent survey of 473 Minnesota businesses revealed that many have thought about providing a wide range of child care-related benefits for employees.

Results of the survey, sent to 5,000 Minnesota businesses between August and November, were reported Wednesday at a meeting of Rochester's Business and Industrial Child Care Task Force at the Kahler Hotel. The task force has been working recently with local employers to examine possible employee benefits for balancing work and family life.

The survey was conducted by Parents in the Workplace of St. Paul, a management resource for employers offering a variety of services including assessment of child care needs, feasibility studies and technical assistance.

Tom Copeland, an attorney and industrial specialist with the firm, presented the statewide results, while Tutti Sherlock of the task force and director of Olmsted County Child Care Resource and Referral, looked at the Rochester comparison.

Employers, Copeland said, are coming to grips with problems related to work and family. The survey revealed a high level of interest in business-initiated child care benefits to employees.

"Many employers believe assisting with child care needs has a positive effect for the company," he

said, but most companies do not implement benefits and policies because they are not aware of all the options that such benefits might be cost-effective."

A common response from businesses is that they will be pressured to provide on-site child care centers, Copeland added. "This is where the attention has been focused, but most cannot or will not consider this option because of high cost and limited company size," he said.

Sixty-three percent of the respondents say they would not consider the possibility. However, across the country the biggest growth in benefits has been on-site child care, especially in hospital or medical settings. "The reason is the competition, the need for a recruitment incentive for nurses and the odd working hours," Copeland said. Few on-site centers can pay their way and "all businesses have to subsidize them to some extent in space, heat or janitorial services."

All parents using the centers must pay a child care rate, but the centers that are open to the public provide a discount to employees.

At the end of 1981 there were nine licensed on-site child care centers in Minnesota. One is located at Rochester Community College. It serves staff and students.

Traditionally women have been reluctant to talk about child care problems and their jobs "because it implies they cannot do their jobs well," Copeland said. When questioned, most women will say they are satisfied with their child care "because if they don't it also may imply they shouldn't be working or may not be good parents," he added.

A big issue for the future may be day care for sick children as a way to cut down on parent absenteeism from

work. There are two programs in the country and one is in Minneapolis. The program pays trained professionals to go into homes while parents go to work. "A lot of people are interested in the problem, but there's no easy answer and the biggest issue is cost," Copeland said. "Instead we see employees telling employers they are the ones who are sick when in fact it is their children. Some will even use vacation time this way and I don't even think employers realize it's happening."

More than 70 percent of the survey respondents believed that assisting employees with child care needs has a positive effect on absenteeism, employee recruitment, retention, productivity and morale. Less than 5 percent said it would have a negative effect.

The survey identified the major concerns of employers as absenteisms due to sick children, the inability to locate adequate care providers and a concern for equity when only some employees would be taking advantage of these benefits.

Many benefits seen as options to onsite location already are in place in companies in the state. Copeland points out that Minnesota, Texas and California are leading the way in adding these benefits, which include flexible scheduling of employee work hours, part-time work, leave for sick children and disability leave for new mothers.

Very few companies said they have established procedures to deal with these child care benefits as they do with health care. "Most of the time nothing is written down and it gets down to individual cases and this happens from the smallest to the largest companies," he said.

Other benefits that are considered

options include worksite education programs to help parents learn to balance work and family responsibilities, child care information and referral services, flexible benefit programs and job sharing.

Employers want to know cost benefits for these programs especially for employee productivity. There is no proof these benefits will have results, he said. But a 1973 study at Northside Child Development Center in Minneapolis showed that among employees who worked at a participating company, the average employee monthly absenteeism declined 22.5 percent over a 3-year period after enrolling their children at the center. In addition, the turnover rate of mothers using the child care center was 37 percent of that of mothers not using the center. No similar cost benefit studies have been done since in Minnesota.

Fifty-five percent of all surveys tallied outstate came from Rochester. The Rochester Chamber of Commerce distributed surveys to 800 businesses; 104 were returned.

Responses from this community were generally more conservative than the statewide results, said Sherlock. Sixty-nine percent of Rochester companies surveyed said they had leave care for sick children, compared to 58 percent of the total state. Also 20 percent of the Rochester companies make charitable contributions to child care services compared to 15 percent statewide.

Copeland said leadership for these benefits cannot come from business alone. "It is unrealistic to expect business to take over and meet all of these needs. If anything happens it is because all kinds of groups combine resources."



Copeland

Employers express keen interest in child care

National, state and local surveys of businesses recognize the growing importance of women in the workforce. In Olmsted County the percentage of females over the age of 16 in the workforce has grown from 37.4 percent in 1950 to 45.00 percent in 1960 to 50.0 percent in 1970. The 1980 census figures on the percentage of women in the workforce in Olmsted County are not available at this time, but estimates range from 51.0 to 55.0 percent. The rate of growth of two-career families and single females in the workforce is expected to continue in the future.

The Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce and Child Care Resource and Referral participated in a statewide survey conducted by Parents in the Workplace this fall. Survey findings in the statewide study, based on returned survey forms from Rochester and other areas, revealed that employers were genuinely concerned about assisting employees in meeting child care needs for two-career families.

More than 5,000 questionnaires were

mailed to employers statewide through chambers of commerce and trade associations. Of these, 473 surveys were returned; 104 were from Rochester.

The survey indicated that local firms are already providing many of the services needed by two-career families. More than 70 percent of the respondents now provide or are considering flexible scheduling of work hours, part-time work, leave for care for sick children, leave for new mothers, and child care information and referral.

Local firms also felt that assisting with child care produced positive effects. More than 60 percent of those responding said that productivity, absenteeism, retention of employees, recruitment of new employees and company morale benefit by assisting with child care.

OTHER STUDIES AND POLLS

Studies conducted by the American Management Association in 1973 and 1977 on flextime alone indicated that 97 percent of the organizations using it experienced im-

proved employee morale and 73 percent of those firms reduced absenteeism as a result of flextime. In the same studies, tardiness was reduced and productivity increased. A study conducted at the Northside Child Development Center in Minneapolis showed that employees from a participating company reduced their absenteeism by 22.5 percent over a three-year period.

Recent Gallup and Harris polls conducted nationally suggested that employers could make it easier for working parents to arrange their jobs and careers around their children. Ninety-two percent of the delegates at the 1980 White House Conference on Families recommended that business initiate family-oriented policies.

Businesses are effectively responding to the upsurge of women in the workforce by providing policies that allow balancing the career and family responsibilities.

Minnesota and Rochester survey results are listed in the table below.

Child Care: Survey of Employers* — Fall, 1981

Percents listed below are for the entire state followed by Rochester in each category.

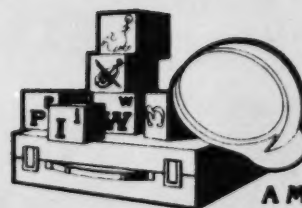
PART A: "Which best describes what your company is doing concerning the following?"	Currently have this		Are considering/ Could consider		Wouldn't do this	
	MN	Rochester	MN	Rochester	MN	Rochester
a) Two people sharing one job?	28.0%	26.7%	49.0%	40.6%	23.0%	32.7%
b) Flexible scheduling of work hours?	54.0%	48.1%	30.0%	26.9%	16.0%	25.0%
c) Opportunity for part-time work?	81.0%	81.7%	14.0%	9.6%	5.0%	8.7%
d) Leave to care for sick children?	58.0%	69.9%	26.0%	15.5%	16.0%	14.6%
e) Child care center at the worksite?	2.0%	2.0%	35.0%	19.6%	63.0%	78.4%
f) Corporate charitable contributions to child care programs?	15.0%	20.0%	39.0%	27.0%	46.0%	53.0%
g) Subsidy for parents who choose their own day care program?	3.0%	1.0%	28.0%	18.8%	69.0%	80.2%
h) Cooperate jointly with other businesses in providing child care benefits?	7.0%	.0%	56.0%	55.0%	37.0%	45.0%
i) Disability leave for new mothers?	71.0%	56.9%	17.0%	25.5%	12.0%	17.6%
j) Child care leave for new parents?	38.0%	31.4%	38.0%	32.3%	24.0%	36.3%
k) Worksite seminars to help parents learn to balance work and family responsibilities?	6.0%	4.9%	64.0%	54.9%	30.0%	40.2%
l) Child care information/referral service?	14.0%	9.8%	64.0%	61.8%	22.0%	28.4%
m) Benefit package which allows employees to choose which benefits they want?	16.0%	15.5%	52.0%	42.7%	32.0%	41.8%
n) Subscribe to outside agency to provide family related services for employee?	19.0%	9.2%	48.0%	41.8%	33.0%	49.0%
PART B: "In your opinion, does assisting with employee child care needs have a positive effect, no effect, or a negative effect on the following?"	Positive Effect		No Effect		Negative Effect	
	MN	Rochester	MN	Rochester	MN	Rochester
a) Employee productivity?	72.0%	70.0%	25.0%	29.0%	3.0%	1.0%
b) Absenteeism?	80.0%	73.0%	15.0%	22.0%	5.0%	5.0%
c) Recruitment of new employees?	73.0%	66.0%	25.0%	32.0%	2.0%	2.0%
d) Retention of current employees?	71.0%	64.0%	27.0%	35.0%	2.0%	1.0%
e) Company profits?	41.0%	39.0%	49.0%	49.0%	10.0%	12.0%
f) Employee morale?	85.0%	78.0%	12.0%	20.0%	3.0%	2.0%
g) Tardiness?	67.0%	54.0%	30.0%	40.0%	3.0%	6.0%
h) Employee training costs?	33.0%	35.0%	60.0%	57.0%	7.0%	8.0%

* Survey based on 5,000 questionnaires sent to Minnesota business. Total surveys returned in Minnesota were 473 of which 104 were from Rochester.



Parents in the Workplace Report

- 1 The Impact of Working Women on Business**
- 2 Minnesota Business Survey**
- 3 Taxes and Child Care Programs**
- 4 On the Job Parent Training**
- 5 Child Care Delivery System**
- 6 Flexible Benefits**



Parents in the Workplace
A Management Resource for Employers

Summary of Findings

A recent survey of 473 Minnesota businesses has revealed that many now provide, or are considering providing, a wide range of child care related benefits for their employees.

Flexible scheduling of employees' work hours, part-time work, leave to care for sick children and disability leave for new mothers lead the list of benefits now offered by these businesses. Benefits being considered the most included worksite parent education seminars, child care information/referral service, a flexible benefit program, and job sharing. (See chart #1)

In addition, over 70% of the respondents believe that assisting their employees with child care needs has a positive effect on absenteeism, employee recruitment, retention, productivity and morale. In all, less than 5% believed that it would have a negative effect. (See chart #2)

The survey identified the following major concerns of employers with parent employees: absenteeism due to sick children, the inability to locate an adequate child care provider, and a concern for equity when only some employees could take advantage of a child care benefit.

Child Care Options

Chart #1 indicates that Minnesota businesses offer a wide variety of benefits and policies to working parents. In many cases, employee problems and concerns regarding child care are handled informally rather than under a written policy. This was found to be especially true for small companies where employees' problems are often treated on an individual basis and the company can be more flexible in making the necessary accommodations. Some employers occasionally permit their employees to bring their small children to work in an emergency. Other employers shift office hours to allow employees to attend special school functions and doctor's appointments.

Further examples of employer-initiated programs for working parents:

- **Sick leave for children** — Red Wing Shoe Company provides up to 30 days per year of unpaid leave for its employees to care for sick children or other illness in the family. All benefits continue to be paid by the company during the sick leave and there is the possibility of a leave extension. Precision Cosmet Company in Minnetonka allows up to six months of unpaid leave for disability associated with child birth or for family illness. Saturn Systems, Inc. in Eden Prairie has only ten employees and no written policy, but is flexible in providing paid time off on an individual basis to care for sick children. Many of these employees program mini-computers in their homes on a part-time, contract basis during evenings.

- **Child care subsidy** — St. Paul's United Hospitals and the Children's Hospital provide a child care allowance for employees who work the 11 p.m.-7 a.m. shift. This prorated subsidy, based on the number of hours worked, covers up to two children in a licensed family day care home or center.

- **Family leave** — Washington Scientific Industries in Long Lake has a family leave of absence program for family-related problems. The program covers up to 30 days of unpaid leave. To date the leave has primarily been used by male employees. The First National Bank of Pine City employs thirty people and allows six paid personal days a year, a policy that has been in effect since 1977. The reason for instituting the policy was because many young mothers needed extra time off to meet their home responsibilities.

- **Corporate charitable contributions** — Tennant Company of Golden Valley and Northern States Power of Minneapolis are two of a number of companies that have made charitable contributions to Child Care Services, Inc., a Twin Cities program that provides trained health care personnel to care for ill children in the home when parents must work. North American Life and Casualty Company of Minneapolis donates money to a nearby child care center. Another company loans some of its management services to a non-profit child care center.

- **Worksite parent seminars** — Mount Sinai Hospital in Minneapolis provided a series of four noontime seminars on parenting as part of their employee assistance program. The First National Bank of Minneapolis has offered seminars on balancing the responsibilities of the workplace and family and one on prenatal care. Both the company and the employee give up some freetime for the seminars. The Otto Bremer Foundation sponsored parent education and child care training seminars for twenty of their Bremer Bank Group communities in Minnesota, Wisconsin and North Dakota.

Employer Attitudes About the Effects of Child Care Benefits

Chart #2

In your opinion, does assisting with employee child care needs have a positive effect, no effect, or a negative effect on the following:

	Positive Effect	No Effect	Negative Effect
(a) Employee productivity?	319/72%	112/25%	13/3%
(b) Absenteeism?	369/80%	68/15%	22/5%
(c) Recruitment of new employees?	327/73%	111/25%	8/2%
(d) Retention of current employees?	312/71%	119/27%	7/2%
(e) Company profits?	169/41%	201/49%	40/10%
(f) Employee morale?	378/85%	55/12%	10/3%
(g) Tardiness?	296/67%	132/30%	16/3%
(h) Employee training costs?	138/33%	253/60%	28/7%

Based on 473 returns

• **Child care information/referral service** — A computerized information and referral service that helps parents locate current openings in licensed family day care homes and day care centers throughout Hennepin County has been funded by several organizations, including General Mills, Honeywell, Northwestern National Life Insurance Company, Tennant Foundation, Northwestern Bank Employees' Council and Northwestern Bell Telephone Company. In Ramsey County a similar computerized system is being set up with help from the Downtown Employers Task Force on Child Care and with funds from the St. Paul Companies, 3M and First Bank St. Paul.

Effects on Employee Performance

Below are examples of the major problems cited by employer respondents:

"Absence because of sick children, tardiness and worry because of child care problems."

"Morale suffers with extra work load when one is on maternity leave."

"Have had a couple of working mothers leave the company because suitable child care wasn't available."

"Use of sick leave to care for children at home."

By a more than 2-1 margin, the business respondents believe that assisting with employee child care needs has a positive effect on employee productivity, absenteeism, recruitment, retention, morale and tardiness. Less than 50% of the respondents believed

that company profits and employee training would be positively effected. (See chart #2) Those who believed that employee performance would be negatively effected only amounted to between 2% and 10% of the respondents.

A logical question to ask might be, "If so many employers believe that assisting with employee child care needs has a positive effect on the company, why aren't more companies implementing additional child care benefits and policies?" One reason could be that that responses only indicate the opinion of one person within the company. The company decision makers may not share the same opinions. Another reason could be that employers are not aware of all the different benefits and policies that are possible, or they may be concerned that such benefits will not be cost effective.

On this last point, there are few, detailed cost benefit studies of the effects of child care programs on employee productivity issues. The survey respondents showed great interest in this area. Further information about the costs of providing various child care benefits was desired by 59% of the respondents, and 67% wanted to know the effects of child care benefits on company profits.

One study which is available was done at the Northside Child Development Center in Minneapolis. It showed that among employees who worked at a participating company, the average monthly absenteeism declined 22.5% over a three year period after enrolling their children at the center. In addition, the turnover rate of mothers using the child care center was 37% of that of mothers not using the center. This study, however, was completed in 1973 and no similar cost benefit studies have since been undertaken in the state.

Across the country there are a few reports of tangible economic benefits to companies that initiated child care programs:

- 89% of the employers with on-site child care centers reported an increase in their ability to attract new employees, according to a national study done by Kathryn Senn Perry.

- Intermedics Corporation in Texas experienced an estimated 9% cut in employee turnover and a reduction in absenteeism of 3,400 personhours since their on-site center opened in 1980.

- Surveys done by the American Management Association on flexible work hours in 1974 and 1977 showed that flextime improved employee morale in 97% of the organizations using it. Absenteeism was reduced in 73% of the organizations, tardiness was reduced in 84% of the organizations and 48% reported increased productivity.

But such studies on the financial impact on corporations of instituting various child care benefits are rare. In many businesses, however, financial consideration is only one factor in deciding whether a child care benefit is adopted. A company philosophy that leads management to concern itself with the well being of its employees and their families can be very important. Hardy Rickbeil, the former owner of Rickbeil's Inc. of Worthington says, "Kids are the future" and this attitude is reflected in the flexible way the company has responded to employees who have become pregnant. Many other companies have adopted their child care programs simply because, as Robert Taival, Personnel Director of St. Luke's Hospital in Duluth said, "It sends a clear message that the hospital is interested in and cares about our employees."

On-Site Child Care Centers

As of the end of 1981 there were nine on-site child care centers in Minnesota. Two more are expected to open in early 1982. Below is a list of the business sponsors and the year their child care center opened.

- 1971 Mercy Medical Hospital — Coon Rapids
- 1973 Fairview Community Hospital — Minneapolis
- 1975 Rochester Community College — Rochester
- 1979 Carlson Craft — Mankato
- 1979 The Retirement Center — Buffalo
- 1980 St. Ansgar Hospital — Moorhead
- 1981 Cardiac Pacemaker — Shoreview
- 1981 William Mitchell College of Law — St. Paul
- 1981 Mount Sinai Hospital — Minneapolis
- Early 1982 Abbot-Northwestern Children's Hospital in Minneapolis and St. Luke's Hospital in Duluth.

A number of other businesses are planning to open child care centers for their employees in the near future. Although there has been much media attention focused on this option over the past year, companies with on-site centers represented only 2% of the survey respondents. Fully 63% of the respondents said that they would not consider this option, probably because of the high cost of such a program or the limited size of the company. Businesses with a largely female workforce, a late work shift, or a particular recruitment or retention problem were most likely to have an on-site center. Hospitals currently sponsor a majority of the centers. A number of other hospital centers are in the planning stages.

All of the businesses with on-site centers subsidize their operations to some degree. Some only provide space or limited support services, and parents are charged the going rate to enroll their children. Others subsidize the rates for their employees while parent users from the community pay the full fee.

Lutheran Deaconess Hospital in Minneapolis gives its employees a 20% discount for those using the child care center connected with Fairview Community Hospital. The centers are run either by company staff or by outside child care providers.

About the Survey

The survey was conducted by Parents in the Workplace, a nonprofit organization based in St. Paul, Minnesota. Parents in the Workplace is a consultation service for businesses with employees who are parents. The survey was sent to approximately 5,000 Minnesota businesses between August and November 1981 and 473 responses were received. A majority of the surveys were filled out by personnel department staff. Mailing lists from a number of Chambers of Commerce and other trade associations were used.

Returned surveys that came from 36 banks and financial institutions, 29 hospitals, 26 nursing homes, and 24 insurance companies expressed a higher than average level of activity and interest in child care benefits. The remaining respondents were from a wide assortment of large and small companies including retail businesses, manufacturers, hotels and non-profit organizations. Thirty-eight per cent of the respondents were from outside the Twin City Metropolitan Area. Because the mailing lists sometimes overlapped each other, the survey respondents do not represent a scientific sample of all Minnesota businesses. Follow-up calls were made to a number of respondents to gather further details for this report.

Options for Employer Sponsored Child Care

Chart #1

Which best describes what your company is doing concerning the following?

	Currently Have This	Are Considering/ Could Consider	Wouldn't Do This
(a) Two people sharing one job?	131/28%	223/49%	107/23%
(b) Flexible scheduling of employee's work hours?	255/54%	141/30%	77/16%
(c) Opportunity for part-time work?	376/81%	67/14%	23/5%
(d) Leave to care for sick children?	271/58%	121/26%	75/16%
(e) Child care center at the worksite?	9/2%	161/35%	291/63%
(f) Corporate charitable contributions to child care programs?	67/15%	175/39%	206/46%
(g) Subsidy for parents who choose their own day care program?	12/3%	130/28%	317/69%
(h) Cooperate jointly with other businesses in providing child care benefits?	32/7%	261/56%	169/37%
(i) Disability leave for new mothers?	326/71%	77/17%	57/12%
(j) Child care leave for new parents?	173/38%	175/38%	110/24%
(k) Worksite seminars to help parents learn to balance work and family responsibilities?	29/6%	299/64%	141/30%
(l) Child care information/referral service?	66/14%	294/64%	99/22%
(m) Benefit package which allows employees to choose which benefits they want?	72/16%	244/52%	151/32%
(n) Subscribe to outside agency to provide family related services for employees?	82/19%	210/48%	149/33%

Based on 473 returns

The Problem of Equity

Said one respondent: "(Our) largest concern is treating employees with young children and employees without, equally. Hard to motivate the latter group when they see the first group getting extra paid time off, etc."

One solution for companies with this problem is to institute a flexible benefit program. Often called "cafeteria" benefits, such a program usually provides employees with a "core" of fixed benefits (medical, insurance, vacation, etc.) and then allows them to choose additional amounts of some benefits over others, or choose elective benefits such as child care, according to individual need. The survey indicated that 244 companies are considering, or could consider, such a program. (See chart #1.).

Offering a child care option under a flexible benefit program has become more attractive under the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981. The law says that amounts paid by an employer to an employee under a qualified dependent care assistance program are not included in the gross income of the employee, for the tax year beginning January 1, 1982. The dependent care assistance program may assist employees by paying providers who offer dependent care, directly reimbursing employees for their child care costs, or establishing an on-site child care center. (See chapter 3 in the Parents in the Workplace Report for more tax and child care information.)

Conclusion

The survey results reveal a high level of interest in business-initiated child care benefits and programs. Many companies are just beginning to consider this subject by gathering information, forming task forces and assessing their own particular needs. Because of the diversity in company size, number of parent employees and employee needs, there is clearly no one best solution to the problem.

The survey results indicate that during the next few years Minnesota will see a major increase in the response of business to the needs of working parents.

December, 1981

Parents in the Workplace: A Management Resource for Employers offers businesses a variety of important services: Assessments of employee child care needs, Feasibility studies to assess the impact of specific child care benefit options, Technical assistance, Seminars for human resource/personnel staff, and Resource materials.

Parents in Workplace is a division of Toys 'n Things Training and Resource Center, a non-profit corporation. Much of the funding for Parents in the Workplace services is provided by CETA and the Minnesota Department of Education, Adult Vocational Section through the St. Paul Technical Vocational Institute.

For further information, write or call: Parents in the Workplace, 906 North Dale Street, St. Paul, MN 55103; (612) 488-7284.

© Copyright, Toys 'n Things 1981

The "Parents in the Workplace" Study for Minnesota Businesses

1. Which best describes what your company is doing concerning the following?
(Check one for each item.)

	Currently Have This	Are Considering/ Could Consider	Wouldn't Do This
(a) Two people sharing one job?	(131) 28%	(233) 49%	(107) 23%
(b) Flexible scheduling of employee's work hours?	(255) 54%	(141) 30%	(77) 16%
(c) Opportunity for part-time work?	(376) 81%	(61) 11%	(23) 5%
(d) Leave to care for sick children?	(271) 58%	(121) 26%	(75) 16%
(e) Child care center at the worksite?	(9) 2%	(61) 35%	(291) 63%
(f) Corporate charitable contributions to child care programs?	(67) 15%	(175) 39%	(266) 46%
(g) Subsidy for parents who choose their own day care program?	(12) 3%	(130) 28%	(347) 69%
(h) Cooperate jointly with other business in providing child care benefits?	(32) 7%	(261) 56%	(461) 37%
(i) Disability leave for new mothers?	(326) 71%	(77) 17%	(57) 12%
(j) Child care leave for new parents?	(173) 38%	(175) 38%	(110) 24%
(k) Worksite seminars to help parents learn to balance work and family responsibilities?	(29) 6%	(299) 64%	(141) 30%
(l) Child care information/referral service?	(66) 14%	(294) 64%	(99) 22%
(m) Benefit package which allows employees to choose which benefits they want?	(72) 16%	(244) 52%	(151) 32%
(n) Subscribe to outside agency to provide family related services for employees?	(82) 19%	(210) 48%	(449) 33%

If your company has produced any written descriptions of these programs, would you be willing to share these with us?

Yes _____ No _____

2. What other things does your company do to help employees cope with their child care needs?

see separate page

3. In your opinion, does assisting with employee child care needs have a positive effect, no effect, or a negative effect on the following:
(Check one response for each item)

	Positive Effect	No Effect	Negative Effect
(a) Employee productivity?	(349) 72%	(112) 25%	(13) 3%
(b) Absenteeism?	(369) 80%	(68) 15%	(22) 5%
(c) Recruitment of new employees?	(327) 73%	(111) 25%	(8) 2%
(d) Retention of current employees?	(342) 71%	(119) 27%	(7) 2%
(e) Company profits?	(169) 41%	(201) 49%	(40) 10%
(f) Employee morale?	(378) 85%	(55) 12%	(10) 3%
(g) Tardiness?	(276) 67%	(132) 30%	(16) 3%
(h) Employee training costs?	(138) 33%	(253) 60%	(68) 7%

4. Please describe problems you have had related to child care needs of employees or related to any of your child care benefits.

see separate page

5. Has your company done the following?
(Check one response for **each** item)

	Yes	No, But Are Considering/ Could Consider	No
(a) Conducted an employee survey about their child care needs?	(70) 15%	(137) 29%	(261) 56%
(b) Met with other employers to consider child care related problems?	(86) 18%	(112) 24%	(272) 58%
(c) Requested proposals from a child care center?	(51) 11%	(94) 20%	(325) 69%
(d) Had management discussions about child care issues?	(62) 35%	(82) 18%	(223) 47%
(e) Initiated a child care employee benefit but dropped it because it didn't work?	(7) 2%	(24) 5%	(427) 93%
(f) Appointed someone within your company to handle child care problems?	(49) 11%	(55) 12%	(361) 77%
(g) Other _____	()	()	()

6. Does your company know about the following?
(Check one response for **each** item)

	Yes	No, but we want to know more about this	No, we're not interested in this
(a) Tax incentives for employers who provide child care benefits?	(107) 24%	(238) 53%	(106) 23%
(b) Tax information for employees who receive child care benefits?	(117) 26%	(249) 56%	(80) 18%
(c) Costs of providing various child care benefits?	(85) 19%	(264) 59%	(95) 22%
(d) Research that shows the effects of child care benefits on company profits?	(61) 14%	(296) 67%	(87) 19%
(e) How to assess your own needs and develop a benefits program for working parents?	(69) 15%	(279) 62%	(96) 23%

7. Please list the names of any other companies you know that provide employees with benefits related to child care needs.

Name of Company

Contact Person

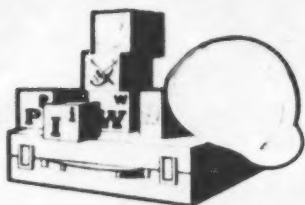
8. Name of person filling out this form _____

Title _____

Name of Company _____

Address _____

9. Do you wish to receive a summary of this study? Yes 400 88% No 52 12%
10. Please return this form to Tom Copeland, **Parents in the Workplace**, 906 N. Dale St., St. Paul, MN 55103 (612) 488-7284.



PARENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

A Management Resource for Employers

2. What other things does your company do to help employees cope with their child care needs?

Child Care Facility

Child care facilities to start 1/01/82.

Have an on-site facility "Busy Bee Learning Center."

New Child care center opened near site and provided information to employees

We are looking into the possibility of adding room for a child care center during our next plant expansion ('82-83).

We are in the process of trying to set up a day care for our employ-es.

Currently Walker is establishing a night time child care program at the site of a licensed day program.

Offer child care discount to employees for our corporation run day care.

Flexible Scheduling

Flexibility

Flexible and liberal for family needs

Flexible scheduling.

Urge work only hours that won't effect family.

Flexible leave time which can be used for child care needs.

Extended maternity leave if requested.

Management sensitive to child care needs. Hours flexible and time off possible.

Flex hours is number one, information available through personnel, would like to do more.

Work out schedule with them - must rotate shifts, but we work around their schedule as much as possible.

Mini-shifts.

Mothers not expected to work on days school is out.

Extended maternity leave beyond disability period - unpaid but preserves employment status and pay level.

Schedule around child care needs.

Reduced hours during school vacations.

Shift office employees hours during the school year.

Counseling

Provide salaries (often overlooked). Counseling.

Counsel employee should there be a problem.

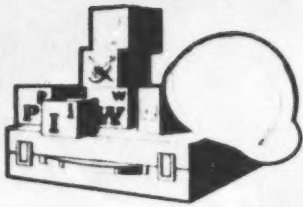
Help with child care, articles in internal publication, counseling.

Internal company counseling.

Social worker's available for counseling on all issues.

Help them contact agencies which might help.

Referrals and counseling through the company nurse.



PARENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

A Management Resource for Employers

Continued

2. What other things does your company do to help employees cope with their child care needs?

Employee Assistance Program - Individual assistance

We are too small to set up day care programs. We help our employees as situations arise all we can.

We encourage department managers to remain sensitive and aware of problems resulting from employee's child care needs.

Humanistic approach to personnel problems, including open door policy.

Disability leave for pregnancy and employee assistance program.

EAP family services.

Planning day care center subsidized by hospital, and new employee assistance program.

Look at individual case basis rather than a "company-wide" approach.

We are very flexible with all employees regarding child care needs. We treat each case very individually and allow suggestions from them.

Exercise common sense and reason in the judgments to be made in each individual instance.

Employee assistance program - encompasses all family and personal problem areas.

Company Does Nothing

We are limited in what we can do, due to being a unionized company.

Nothing.

It has generally been left to employees to make any necessary child care arrangements.

Nothing specific and at times it is a real problem.

Few employees with child care need, policy informal.

Child care needs limited.

No actual child care problem, would like to have one.

Trying to find solution for critical problem.

Need ideas.

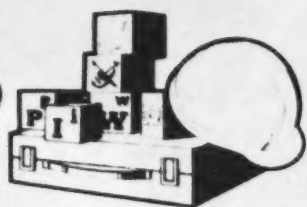
We haven't done anything specific.

The company currently does nothing. The marks above suggest that these steps might be considered although they are not currently a significant priority.

Very little.

Nothing right now.

At the present time we do nothing.



PARENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

A Management Resource for Employers

Continued

2. What other things does your company do to help employees cope with their child care needs?

Other

About the only thing we have is a good disability leave plan which our employees are using extensively. We've kept good people this way.

Special optional paid absence policy that may be utilized in "need" situations of supervisor approval.

Referral to County Day Associations, employees volunteer for related boards.

Permit child (6-16) to accompany parent to work on occasions.

Employees bring their children to work with them in real emergencies when child care is not available. Museum setting offers good alternative.

HMO and family medical benefits.

Participate with other downtown companies to explore options - GMDCA.

General assistance.

Employee family in the workplace task force.

Any employee can take an unpaid leave for a good reason (ie child care). Cannot guarantee a job after 30 days.

Announcement newsletter about emergency child care.

Flexibility to meet special needs.

Nutrition consultations.

Emergency leave, contract to assist employees with child care needs.

Employees may bring children to owners home for housekeeper to care for.

No problem having employees leave work for sick child or school function.

Loaned management services to non-profit child care centers.

Time given for parent teacher conferences, have freedom to leave if child is ill.

Referral service.

Provides employee health and dental insurance, dependent insurance at half price.

Allow sick pay, encourage staff and make opportunity for them to attend related seminars.

Counselors are working on feasibility study to determine need for day care center (we presently only have nursery school).

Primarily information referral-have done of surveys re. need.

Permanent full-time employees are allowed up to 5 days paid time out for illness in the family; permanent part-time employees are allowed up to 8 hours each calendar year.

Basically, this is an informal process. Child care info is shared "word of mouth".

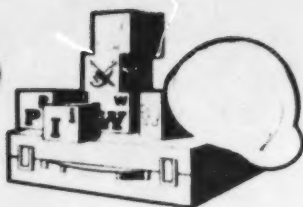
Our company is beginning to address these issues.

Support them and provide some resources available.

Provide insurance for family.

Good child birth insurance program.

Allow them in workplace with children as situations dictate.



PARENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

A Management Resource for Employers

4. Please describe problems you have had related to child care needs of employees or related to any of your child care benefits.

Sick Children - Absenteeism

Having to leave work due to illness or injury of a child.

An ill child causing a parent to leave work.

Use of sick leave to care for children at home.

Absenteeism, tardiness.

Especially with regard to female parents, married or single, seem to require quite a bit of leave time for sick children.

Minor amount of turnover because of child care problems - some absenteeism due to children's sickness, doctors appointments, etc.

Absent from work because of child's illness.

Tardiness, not returning from disability leave.

Absenteeism and turmoil when switch in babysitter.

Single parents highest level of tardiness and absenteeism.

Terminate or absenteeism - child care problems.

Space for child care, absenteeism and performance problem.

Absenteeism.

Absenteeism and turnover due to child care related problems.

Some minor tardiness/absenteeism.

Working mothers - absenteeism/low production.

Absenteeism.

Tardiness, leaving work unexpectedly.

Increasing number of leave without pay and absenteeism particularly to care for newborns.

Finding sub for parent who went home after sick child.

Sick time is for employee only. Feels some of it is paid for cure of sick child.

Absenteeism.

Absenteeism.

Absenteeism.

Absenteeism due to child's illness.

Some absenteeism and tardiness due to child related problems.

Absenteeism of sick children.

Sudden absences for child care emergencies.

Tardiness, absenteeism, resign because of child care needs

Absenteeism - child care - sick children - doctors appointments.

Absenteeism due to child care.

Absenteeism - child care sick child.

Absenteeism - sick child.

Absenteeism - tardiness, performance problems, over worry, etc.

Absenteeism - tardiness.

Lost time - children's illness.

Tardiness/absenteeism due to health of child.

Increased absenteeism.

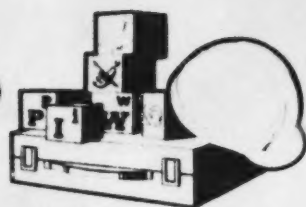
Absenteeism related to child care problems.

Parents using sick leave to care for young children and becoming ill.

A Division of Toys 'n Things Training and Resource Center, Inc.

906 North Dale Street, St. Paul, MN 55103

(612) 488-7284



PARENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

A Management Resource for Employers

Continued

4. Please describe problems you have had related to child care needs of employees or related to any of your child care benefits.

Sick Children - Absenteeism (Continued)

Absenteeism - tardiness.

Absenteeism, tardiness, poor performance.

Absenteeism and tardiness, termination (voluntary), decline of job offer, accident proneness.

Absenteeism.

Absenteeism/tardiness/need to leave work.

Absenteeism, tardiness, worry on the job.

Absenteeism and turnover

Sometimes had additional time off which is not covered by company benefits covering days off (ie vacation and sickness).

Only when an employee has to stay home with sick child.

Absenteeism due to days when child care is not available.

Mother's unable to come in because of child's illness.

High absenteeism because of infant/toddler illness, in a few cases.

Employees tardy-absent-often terminate due to problem related to child care.

Absenteeism due to sick children. Not sure of exact problems - just beginning to assess our needs.

We see a need for emergency (last minute) sick care for children.

We have had several employees who have required time off due to special care needs of their children. This has caused some (not significant) staffing problems due to our small staff size (no one else to do the work). Lack of pay has also created economic hardship on employees.

Absenteeism due to sick child.

Tardiness, absenteeism.

Sick children can't go to day care - 6.

When children are ill or involved in a special event, the employee's attention to work decreases.

Availability of Child Care - Finding Child Care

Availability of good child care facilities.

Poor quality unreliable babysitters; sick children - no one to care for them.

A general concern of availability - now none.

Children at worksite when parent can't find a sitter.

New parents locating child care services they are satisfied with.

Need for child care.

Evening and night care, sick child care, care during school holidays.

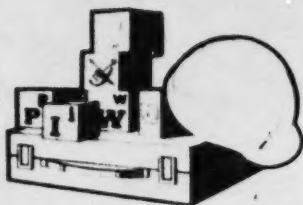
Lack of facilities to accept infants.

Often difficult to find child care especially for infants.

Care facilities needed for infants.

Lack of infant care, lack of part-time care, lack of care for multi-ages.

A Division of Toys 'n Things Training and Resource Center, Inc.
906 North Dale Street, St. Paul, MN 55103 (612) 488-7284



PARENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

A Management Resource for Employers

Continued

4. Please describe problems you have had related to child care needs of employees or related to any of your child care benefits.

Availability of Child Care - Finding Child Care

Day care centers with hours from 7 am - 5:30 pm to not meet the needs of hospital workers.

Two shift child care available.

Employees needing time off to locate child care.

Need to find adequate and reasonable child care facility.

Several mothers left company because of lack of suitable child care.

Have lost some employees who had sitter problems.

Employees don't know where to get information on child care.

Inability to find infant care - absenteeism.

Problems finding competent, affordable, flexible providers - problems with sick children.

Some difficulties in finding quality child care.

Employees can't get babysitters.

Parents responsibility; because of an unreliable babysitter; sickness, won't care for children after a certain hour.

People having to quit because of not being able to find "good" child care.

Students with children have no place to take them.

Child care problems are greatly magnified for our employees who work evening hours and the night shift.

Occasional problems arise with new employees able to locate child care services.

Need for 24 hour day care because of shift work, weekend day care.

Loss of employees due to lack of reliable child care services particularly on 3-11 shift.

Difficulty in finding day care - 2.

Weekend and holiday day care hard to find.

Child care for evening shift hard to find - 2.

No Problems

Have not seen a great deal of problems attributable to child care needs.

Normal concerns. No serious concerns other than usual desire to have competent child care. Some emphasis on solving for care of sick child.

Myriad - largely chemical dependency, emotional problems etc., not much on child care, day care, etc.

None on surface.

Not aware of any.

This personnel department has had few requests from employees on child care.

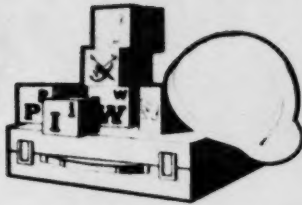
Nothing dramatic.

Women work during pregnancy with no problems.

Small company with little need for child care.

Employees with child care needs too new to assess.

Minimal problems.



PARENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

A Management Resource for Employers

Continued

4. Please describe problems you have had related to child care needs of employees or related to any of your child care benefits.

No Problems (Continued)

Because we are a hospital we schedule employees around the clock - this is a hurdle we have yet to cross.

No problems. Our type of business and our downtown location make it unfeasible and unnecessary to do more than allow for paid time out to cover needed time due to illness, injury, etc. in each employee's family.

Maternity Leave

Extended maternity leave - absenteeism - sick child.

Maternity leave causes productivity problems.

P.L. 95-555 has mandated changes in corporate disability for maternity leave.

Morale suffers with extra work load when one is on maternity leave.

Mothers take 6 months maternity leave and decide not to come back on the day they are to return to work.

Budget Problems - Expensive

No close day care center, costs are prohibitive for some employee's working part-time. Cost for more than one child.

The affirmative action committee pointed out child care deters minorities from employment as costs are high for entry level employees.

AFDC cuts will cause loss of AFDC mothers who are working their way off AFDC.

Cost of several employees on maternity leave at one time.

Lost employee to high cost of child care.

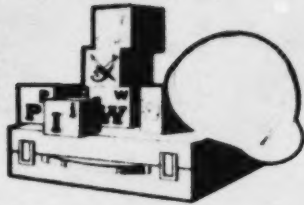
Difficulty establishing satisfactory babysitting, expensive.

Running on a tight budget, as we do, the temporary replacement for employees who need child care time-off is difficult.

Budget cutbacks, decreased funding.

Expensive - 6.

Cost and contract guarantees required by day care centers.



PARENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

A Management Resource for Employers

Continued

4. Please describe problems you have had related to child care needs of employees or related to any of your child care benefits.

Other Problems

Funding sources for small towns area.

We are concerned that some employees may now go on complete assistance where they had once been able to collect benefits for child care.

Unreasonable expectations. Entitlement attitude ie if the employer allows one person to work part-time any employee must be granted the same right. Such an employee stance causes employers to take conservative positions on issues.

Management not ready to make a decision in this area.

Largest concern is in treating employees with young children and employees without equally. Hard to motivate the latter group when they see the first group getting extra paid time off, etc.

No child care benefits provided, per se.

Problem with those who don't have children wanting something in exchange.

Sustaining internal support for the program.

Time spent on phone calls to and from babysitters or children.

Workers without children work under more pressure due to absenteeism for parental responsibilities.

Usual problems for working parents.

High demand, low supply.

Non-parent employees resent money spent on child care. Middle management feels child care costs is the price women must pay for the right to work. Sick children.

Typical ones.

Charge of favoritism from childless and older employees.

Task force has raised child care issue.

Lines at telephone at 7:45 to wake children for school.

Abuse of flextime.

Taking children for routine examination and wanting sick leave time to do this.

Just that many single parents who work here would like a child care center incorporated into the facility.

Needs are largely those very difficult to provide - drop-in, irregular schedule, night and weekend coverage, low cost service.

We looked into a child day care center possibility a few years ago but had virtually no interest.

Start up is not a break even proposition - people in hospital work odd shifts, not always easy to coordinate schedules.

Unable to help the employees working 3 pm- 11 pm shift and week-ends and nights.

Care needs to be exercised that child care does not become the responsibility of the employer.

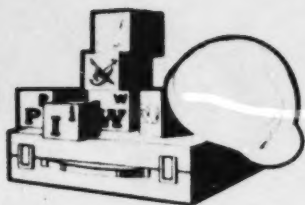
Phone calls from sitter.

On call employee needs 3 hours notice.

Loss of productivity because of child care worries.

Makes flexible schedules difficult at the employer's end.

A Division of Toys 'n Things Training and Resource Center, Inc.
906 North Dale Street, St. Paul, MN 55103 (612) 488-7284



PARENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

A Management Resource for Employers

Continued

4. Please describe problems you have had related to child care needs of employees or related to any of your child care benefits.

Other Problems (Continued)

Untimely needs of family.

Taking time off to take child to doctor - 2.

Extending benefits or privileges to limited number of employees creates a problem with other employees.

Views on Employer-Sponsored Child Care

Child care sponsored by employers appears to be advantageous not only for employees requiring day care for their children, but also for the employers themselves.

This claim is explored by Martha Renfroe in *Employer Sponsored Child Care Models and Related Issues*,^{*} a recent ERIC document which also examines various types of employer-sponsored child care programs, offers suggestions on how the interest groups involved (i.e., employers, parents, and child care staff) can implement such programs, and discusses problems associated with employer-sponsored child care programs.

Advantages for Employees

According to Renfroe, for employees the most obvious advantage of those programs that pay all or part of the child care fees is the reduced cost of child care.

^{*} This document will be available in the ERIC document collection, March 1982; see RIE, Vol. No. 3 for details.

Children Choose

Children's Choices for 1981 is a selected bibliography of children's books published in the United States in 1980.

Compiled under the direction of the Joint Committee of the International Reading Association and the Children's Book Council, this guide is intended to help the teacher, librarian, and parent identify books that children themselves have chosen as being good.

Approximately 10,000 children throughout the United States were given a selection of 500 preselected 1980 books to read and were asked to vote on each book. The final listing was made on the basis of the children's choices.

Single copies of *Children's Choices* may be obtained free by sending a self-addressed 6½ x 9½ envelope, stamped with first class postage for 2 ounces to "Children's Choices," The Children's Book Council, 67 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003.

For those participating in programs located at the workplace, additional savings accrue through reduced transportation costs — employees do not have to travel extra distances to reach their child care facilities.

Parents also have the advantage of proximity to their children in on-site programs. Often in such cases, parents and children lunch together, and parents are readily available should an emergency befall their children.

Some programs — both at and away from the workplace — offer parents other advantages, such as counseling guidance on child rearing and other family matters.

In many programs, parents have the satisfaction of direct participation in center administration and policy-making — a procedure which helps to allay parent's concerns that the employer may have too much control over the care of their children.

Advantages for Employers

The main advantages for employers, contends Renfroe, are reductions in staff turnover and absenteeism, increased production, improved recruitment of employees who have needed skills, better labor relations, and enhanced relations with the community in which the employer's company is situated.

According to Renfroe, companies have documented marked reductions in turnover and absenteeism, and an associated increase in productivity.

Employer Perceptions of Advantages

Despite the advantages pointed to by Renfroe, two recent surveys of businesses suggest that employers may not be so ready to support certain types of child care programs.

These surveys, one conducted in Minnesota by Parents in the Workplace (a division of the Toys 'n Things Training and Resource Center), and the other by Professor Dorothy Hewes of San Diego State University, reveal that businesses may prefer to cater to employees' child care needs through such options as flex-time, job-sharing, maternity and paternity leave, and leave to care for sick children, rather than subsidizing a parent's child care arrangements or providing an on-site child care facility.

Interestingly, respondents in the Hewes survey did not seem to perceive a need to assist employees with child

care, even though they indicated in response to a questionnaire item the type of child care benefits they would prefer to offer.

However, 70% of the Minnesota survey respondents believed that offering child care for their employees was advantageous for their companies for many of the same reasons as those expressed by Renfroe.

Given this finding, the Minnesota investigators expressed puzzlement as to why respondents were not more committed to "additional child care benefits and policies."

Among the possible reasons for this, according to the investigators, may be "that employers are not aware of all the different benefits and policies... or they may be concerned that such benefits [are] not cost effective."

For More Information

For additional information on the Hewes study, "Employer-sponsored Child Care: An Assessment of Local Potential," see *Report on Preschool Education*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 12, 1982, or write Hewes at FSCS, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA 92082.

The Minnesota survey, which also briefly reviews literature on the cost-effectiveness of employer-sponsored child care, is available in summary form from Parents in the Workplace, 906 North Dale Street, St. Paul, MN 55103; phone (612) 488-7284. Ask for the "Parents in the Workplace Report No. 2: The Minnesota Business Survey."

More on Employer Sponsored Child Care in ERIC

Employer-Sponsored Child Care: Policy Discussions, Recommendations, & Bibliography. (Available in the ERIC document collection, February 1982; see RIE, Vol. 17, No. 2 for details.)

Haiman, Peter, Sud, Gian (Eds.) *Employer Supported Child Care: An Idea Whose Time Has Come. A Conference on Child Care as an Employee Benefit* (Costs and Benefits, Successful Programs, Company Options, Current Issues), *Conference Proceedings*. (ED 201 400, 167 p) 1980.

Hardy, Molly B. *On-Site Day Care: State of the Art & Models Development.* (Available in the ERIC document collection, March 1982; see RIE, Vol. 17, No. 3 for details.)

Murray, Kathleen A. *Legal Aspects of Child Care as an Employee Benefit.* (Available in the ERIC document collection, March 1982; see RIE, Vol. 17, No. 3 for details.)

Perry, Kathryn Senn. *Child Care Centers Sponsored by Employers and Labor Unions in the United States.* (ED 200 331, 10 p) 1980.

Perry, Kathryn Senn, Moore, Gary T. *Employers and Child Care: Establishing Services Through the Workplace.* Pamphlet 23. (ED 198 950, 97 p) 1981.

Verzaro-Lawrence, Marce, And Others. *Industry-Related Day Care: Trends and Options.* *Young Children*, Vol. 37, No. 2, Jan 1982, pp. 4-10.

Papers now allow 'parenting leave'

By Josephine Marcetty
Staff Writer

The Minneapolis Star & Tribune Company has changed its leave of absence policy and will now grant up to six months of unpaid leave to fathers as well as mothers of newborn or newly adopted infants.

The policy, announced Tuesday, was changed because "there were those who thought we were discriminating against men," said Rollie LeFebvre, director of employee relations. "If we allowed it to women, there were some men who felt they should have something similar."

The company has changed the name of the policy from "maternity leave" to "parenting leave" to fit its more dual nature.

"We felt we had to get rid of that obsolete term, maternity leave," said LeFebvre.

The new policy came 2½ years after a male employee, Joseph Kimball, filed a sex discrimination complaint against the company when it refused to permit him a six-month leave, without pay, to help care for his newborn daughter. Instead, the company gave him a one-month personal leave without pay.

Kimball, who now covers women's and minorities' issues for the Tribune, filed a complaint with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights charging that the company discriminated against him because he is a man. Female employees were granted up to six months of unpaid leave to care for newborn children.

In June, the rights department agreed with Kimball, finding probable cause that the company's policy was discriminatory. The department asked the company to enter into conciliation discussions in an attempt to end the alleged discriminatory policy. Those discussions have not been concluded, said Diane Vener, assistant to the commissioner of the human rights department.

LeFebvre said the company's policy was not changed as a result of the Kimball case.

APPENDIX S

"One way or the other we had to change (the policy). But no one told us how to change it," he said.

Kimball, however, disagreed.

"No, I don't think they would have changed it (if he hadn't filed his action). "They absolutely refused to do it for me two-and-a-half years ago. But I'm glad to see it happen."

He added that if the company allows women a certain benefit, "it's only right that they do it for men."

Vener said that according to Minnesota law corporations are required to give all employees the same benefits, regardless of race, sex or creed. Leaves of absence are considered a benefit, she said.

Norton Armour, general counsel for the newspaper company, said that though the policy was arrived at independently of the Kimball case, "perhaps it might be a basis upon which it could be settled."

Vener said she could not comment on a case while it is being conciliated.

In comparison to other companies in Minnesota, the Star and Tribune's leave policy is "progressive," said Ellen Hufschmidt, who works for Parents in the Workplace. It is a division of Toys 'N Things, a non-profit training and resource center in St. Paul.

She said her organization has just completed a survey of 325 companies in Minnesota on what kinds of leave policies they have for employees.

Of the 325 companies, 137 said they have child care leaves for "new parents" — the survey form did not ask them to specify if the leaves were available for men as well as women — 115 said they are considering it, and 63 said they would not adopt such a policy.

The companies surveyed range from very small businesses, "like hardware stores," to large companies, and they come from all over the state, said Hufschmidt.

"Our feeling is that to include men is rather unique," she said.

She said she knew of only one other company in Minnesota that included men in a parenting leave policy, Tele-Terminals, Inc., in Brooklyn Park.

Several corporations in Minneapolis said they had no parenting leave policies as such. The Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Co. (3M) said it provides paid disability for women unable to work for medical reasons that arise from childbirth. (The Minneapolis Star & Tribune Company also offers a similar disability benefit.)

"But there's no such thing as a maternity or pregnancy leave," said Henry Owen, a spokesman for 3M.

Employees can get unpaid personal leaves for compelling personal reasons for up to six months, he said. But those are not automatically granted if requested, and must be decided between employees and supervisors.

Control Data Corp. also does not have a parenting leave, said Pat McKinney, spokeswoman for the company. But personal leaves can be arranged between employees and supervisors. Or, in some cases, employees can work at home.

Two share one job and everyone wins

By Josephine Marcetty
Staff Writer

Last January Litahni Coleman and Rae Lee Kubesh presented themselves to the personnel director at Trend Enterprises, Inc., along with an unusual resume.

It stated that Coleman and Kubesh were seeking one full-time position between them — a shared job.

The resume included job histories

and descriptions of both women and even proposed the solutions to any problem an employer might point to as a reason not to hire them.

Since Feb. 1 they have been sharing a job at Trend Enterprises, a New Brighton company that designs and makes bulletin board materials, displays for schools and Stinky Stickers, which give off scents when scratched (they're frequently used in schools). The women handle the mail, telephone orders and other pa-

perwork.

And it's working very well — for the women and their employer.

"It's beneficial to both parties," said Dan Hinrichs, supervisor at Trend. "We support job sharing."

Kubesh and Coleman are two of a growing number of people who are sharing jobs instead of working full time.

A survey by Toys 'N Things Training & Resource Center, Inc., a St. Paul organization that researches work and families, determined that of 370 Minnesota companies questioned in 1981, 28 percent have at least one shared position and 49 percent would seriously consider it.

Tom Copeland, industry specialist for the organization, said some experts predict that by 1990, almost 30

Job sharing continued on page 13C.

Job sharing

Continued from page 7C

percent of the work force will share a job or work part time. "It's definitely a growing thing," he said.

For Coleman and Kubesh, it was the answer to all their problems.

Both are mothers with two children. Both wanted to work part time — but didn't want to pay for day care.

Last winter they agreed that they would find a job together — and when one was working, the other would take care of all four children.

"I just couldn't think of a better way to take care of the kids and work," said Coleman.

In addition, they wanted to reenter the world of work gradually. Neither has worked since their first children were born seven years ago, and both intend to develop careers for themselves and plan eventually to work full time.

They visited some 40 companies, they said, going in together and presenting their joint resume. Invariably, they got the same response.

"First they'd say, 'No, we can't do this, it just won't work,'" said Coleman.

Then after the personnel directors read the resume — and their proposed solutions to problems — employers began to be more responsive, said Kubesh.

The women pointed out that they were friends of long standing and could communicate well with one another and that the company would have a permanent — and trained — replacement whenever one was sick. In fact, they could arrange scheduling with each other during those times.

In addition, they said, both would be available to work during overload situations.

Hinrichs said the company trained the women together to ensure that both learned the job the same way.

Scheduling is a little more complicated, he said, but Kubesh and Coleman take care of most problems them-

selves. "Just as long as one of them is here," said Hinrichs.

Hinrichs said that many jobs within the company could be shared, but drew the line at management positions.

"In management, you have to know from day to day what's happening," he said. "And communicating everything (with a partner) would take up too much time."

Copeland said research has shown an infinite number of jobs can be shared: administrative, counseling, education, engineering and more. Primarily, they must be jobs that involve a lot of independence, and communication between partners and supervisors must be excellent.

Job sharing also has proved to be a more productive way to do work, he said.

"Nobody works eight hours a day anyway," he said. "People who work only four hours a day work faster. And then you have the advantage of always having two minds working on

one problem. The work gets done faster."

The biggest — and as of yet unsolved — problem in job sharing is how to handle benefits, Copeland said. Many researchers have recommended providing full-time benefits for part-time people.

Kubesh and Coleman share benefits at Trend. They split profit-sharing income and vacation days, and though the company was willing to provide each of them full health insurance, they are covered under their husbands' policies, they said.

"There are a lot of financial problems with job sharing," said Copeland. "But the economy will give this idea a big push. There may not be any other way to keep a job — it's either job share or lay off."